1968

Development of the Theme of Materialism in the Social Thesis Drama of Nineteenth Century Spain.

Judith Allen Noble
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEME OF MATERIALISM IN THE SOCIAL THESIS DRAMA OF NINETEENTH CENTURY SPAIN

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Foreign Languages

by
Judith Allen Noble
B.S., Louisiana State University, 1958
May, 1968

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author extends her sincere gratitude to Dr. John A. Thompson and Dr. Harry L. Kirby, Jr. for their assistance in the preparation of this dissertation. She also expresses appreciation to the other members of the faculty of the Department of Foreign Languages for their kindness and cooperation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Materialism and money were basic motivational forces of the social thesis drama in Spain during the last half of the nineteenth century. The purpose of this study is to investigate the political, economic, and social aspects creating the conditions which dramatists saw fit to attack, to indicate the development and maturation of this new genre, to delineate the playwrights' changing attitudes concerning materialism in the theater, and to show in the development of this type of drama the supplantation of the idealized Romantic character by the more realistic and practical person.

Chapters on political, economic, social, and literary background are followed by introductory commentaries on Tamayo y Baus, López de Ayala, Gaspar, Echegaray, and Galdós. These commentaries in turn are followed by discussions of the fourteen plays selected for this study as they reflect the forementioned aspects. A final chapter gives commentary and comparison of these aspects as noted in the various works.

Early in the last half of the nineteenth century Spain experienced a spectacular prosperity and the rise of an unprecedented middle class, resulting in an

overemphasis upon money and luxuries. Theater-goers and dramatists alike, tiring of the excesses of romantic drama, were evincing greater interest in developing social satire. Therefore the time was propitious for Tamayo y Baus and López de Ayala to initiate social thesis drama, to portray and attack the spreading social evil, materialism, which caused people to contract loveless marriages of speculation and to abandon business ethics and principles of honor and friendship in their avaricious quest for wealth. However these authors as novices at this new type of theater followed the familiar pattern of former dramatists in concentrating mainly upon the upper social strata and recommended only superficial reform, advocating sound, moral precepts.

The depression of 1865, together with frequent political overthrows, created an impoverished group which Gaspar attacked in his plays. When renewed prosperity created a second race for wealth, the ruined went to extreme lengths to maintain social façades they could not afford. They endeavored to support new middle class distinctions and standards from which it was a social crime to deviate. In his plays Gaspar also criticized humble men who abandoned principles for ambition and praised both bourgeois and peasant who embraced work and ethical behavior. Because he presented true social questions with life-like denouements, he was often criticized for his naturalistic tendencies, a literary

development not generally accepted by Spaniards.

Echegaray, a recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature, for nearly twenty-five years reigned on the Spanish stage with a stylized revival of neo-romanticism. Though he differed from serious social dramatists, he found it necessary to plead for ethical and moral behavior regarding treatment of money and he indicates the seriousness of the problem.

A depression in the early 1890's, which brought financial peril to many, caused Galdós to attack both the laxity of the bourgeoisie and the parasitism of aristocrats. His realistic plays, brightened with local color, were written with the zeal and optimism of a reformer. Like Gaspar, he advocated dedication to work, adding that the crossing of class lines to merge old ideals with new enterprise would produce, through individual reform, a revitalized, progressive Spain.

In the plays studied we observe an increasing realism, a turning to problems more commonly shared, and an offering of more practical solutions.

INTRODUCTION

Of all the words committed to print, drama is the literary genre most dependent upon public acceptance. This is especially true because a play has not fulfilled its ultimate purpose until it is performed by actors before an audience. Action upon the stage and reaction from the theater-goers create a unique personal relationship found in no other form of art. It follows, then, that the author desiring approval and applause from his audiences must have an awareness and understanding of those who have paid to be entertained by him. Just as the nineteenth-century social-thesis playwright had to possess insight to reflect society as he observed it for the purpose of effecting the requisite recognition of, or identification with, the characters by the audience, so must the twentieth-century reader understand the environment which formed the backdrop for these dramas and the aspects of the then-contemporary plays that now are history.

With this in mind it will be beneficial to superimpose the plays selected for study upon the political, economic, and social patterns of the times. We may thus view, in context, the actions of the <u>dramatis personae</u>, making the words of the authors impart to us

a knowledge richer in content and greater in understanding than would have been possible otherwise. In addition to emphasizing these aspects creating the conditions which dramatists of the period saw fit to attack, this study purports to indicate, through the depiction of society and the solutions proffered, the maturing of this new realistic thesis drama, the authors' changing attitudes toward work, and the remodeling of the stylized romantic hero of the past to conform to the new idealistic pattern.

Fourteen plays, written by five dramatists over a period of forty-eight years, have been chosen for this study. These plays, indicated with the year in which they were first presented, are the following:

Manuel Tamayo y Baus

Hija y madre (1855)

Lo positivo (1862)

Adelardo López de Ayala

El tanto por ciento (1861)

Consuelo (1878)

Enrique Gaspar

Las circunstancias (1867)

La levita (1868)

El estómago (1874)

Las personas decentes (1890)

José Echegaray

O locura o santidad (1877)

El gran galeoto (1881)

Benito Pérez Galdós

La loca de la casa (1893)

La de San Quintín (1894)

Voluntad (1895)

Mariucha (1903)

One of the few things the authors of these plays share in common is their desire to present the question of materialism and money to their audiences. Because of their individual opinions, dramatic theories, and techniques, the span of time during which they wrote, and the changing aspects of the general subject they all treat, it is necessary to include a brief sketch of each author preceding the discussion of his works.

CHAPTER I

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL HISTORY

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Spain was ruled by Charles IV. A weak, unpopular sovereign, he had been losing support in favor of his son Ferdinand. This, coupled with the Napoleonic invasion of 1807, led him to abdicate in 1808. Shortly after Ferdinand ascended the throne he was forced by Napoleon to give the crown to the French. The country took up arms in defense of Ferdinand but the uprising was suppressed and Joseph Bonaparte, the invader's brother, became king. In 1812 a constitution was promulgated. The following year the French were defeated and in 1814 Ferdinand VII returned to the throne. He immediately annulled the progressive, democratic constitution, and exiled, imprisoned and even executed liberals who offended his harsh, tyrannical rule. In 1820 liberal military officers took the king into custody and re-established the Constitution of 1812 which Ferdinand, having no alternative, agreed to accept. With the help of the French army in 1823 Ferdinand forced the liberals to cede. His restoration to power brought on ten more years of tyranny, marked by the exile of liberals, censorship of press, and the closing of universities and

other centers that might breed rebellion. This period of suppression came to an end upon his death in 1833. His three-year-old daughter became Queen Isabel II with her mother, María Cristina, acting as regent.

The fact that the heir to the throne was not a male created a dilemma. During the last ten years of Ferdinand's reign the Carlists, led by Ferdinand's brother as pretender to the throne, openly revolted. Their rebellion was suppressed, but they now demanded that Charles become the recognized ruler of Spain by right of the Salic Law which had been confirmed in the Constitution of 1812 but voided by Ferdinand. After the First Carlist War (1833-1840) came a period of spasmodic uprisings, terminating in a final unsuccessful attempt in 1873 to secure the throne for don Carlos. With his flight three years later the Carlist threat became negligible.

María Cristina, as Queen Regent, sought the support of the liberals who now emerged as two factions, conservatives and progressives. Their divergence of opinion foreshadowed the political chaos that was to come. With the exception of one year of transition (1834-1835) the years from 1812 to the early 1900's can be divided into ten periods with control of the government alternating between revolutionary or reformist and counter-revolutionary or conservative factions. These political alternations which occurred with a degree of regularity were disrupted by increasingly numerous conspiracies, <u>pronunciamientos</u>

and coups d'état. Most of these political upheavals however occurred prior to 1868, for after Queen Isabel's dethronement the government underwent only two party changes.

In 1840 Espartero, hero of the First Carlist War, led a progressive coup d'état and became regent, replacing María Cristina, the Queen Mother, who fled to France. Three years later he too was forced to flee Spain, the government now having been taken over by moderates. When Isabel was thirteen years old she was declared to be of legal age, thereby obviating the problem of regency. From then until she also was driven into exile in 1868 the government passed from one military politician to another.

The Revolution of 1868 created a serious problem: a parliamentary majority for a monarchy but no monarch to place on the throne. Spain finally persuaded the Italian Prince Amadeo of Savoy to accept the crown in 1870, but in little over two years he withdrew. The foreign ruler had been anything but popular; therefore an overwhelming majority now favored a republic. The First Republic was established, but eleven months and four presidents later it failed.

In 1874, with Alfonso XII, son of Queen Isabel II, the House of Bourbon was restored to the throne. He was generally received with favor. Through political compromises and the most capable leadership of Antonio Cánovas

del Castillo, "the greatest statesman of his age,"[1] there was relative calm on the home front.

Alfonso XII died in 1885. Five months later his widow gave birth to a son, Alfonso XIII, for whom she acted as regent during his minority. Political leaders agreed that freedom from political strife was important to progress and they endeavored to maintain a peaceful, advancing Spain.

In 1895 Cuba, which had been at war with Spain from 1870 to 1878, again revolted. As a result of Spain's war with the United States in 1898 Cuba gained her freedom. At this time Spain also lost Puerto Rico and her Pacific holdings. Since her other colonies had all attained independence by 1824, this marked the end of Spain's colonial empire in the New World. In 1902 Alfonso XIII reached the age of sixteen and ascended the throne as a constitutional monarch.

The nineteenth century in Spain consisted of military uprisings, political revolutions, wars of succession, and periods of drastic changes in governmental policies. In reference to the armed conflicts in the years 1812-1945 Antonio Ramos states:

> Although we are wont to speak of the Spanish civil wars, in reality there is only one civil war. What we understand by civil wars are merely military campaigns

---

[1]Edgar Allison Peers, Spain: A Companion to Spanish Studies (5th ed. rev.; London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1956), p. 84.

> or exceptionally violent clashes in the great Spanish civil war whose point of departure is the Napoleonic invasion and whose end is not yet in sight.[2]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century in Spain the middle class as a politically and economically influential group was almost non-existent. At this time most of the land was in the hands of the nobility, of religious groups, in the form of entailed estates, and of the municipalities with their commons. The peasants, mainly day laborers and tenant farmers, lived in near poverty. About fifty per cent of the country's inhabitants were economically productive and only a tenth of that segment was involved in industry. In 1834 Larra said:

> If there is an industrial and commercial middle class in Spain, it is not to be found in Madrid, but in Barcelona, Cadiz, etc.; here there are now only the upper and lower classes.[3]

In the years following the death of Ferdinand the revolutionists began the disentailing of estates. This, coupled with an upward surge in Spain's general economy, produced a new social class: the middle class was emerging and the small peasant proprietor became the bourgeois capitalist. In spite of the political turmoil of the years between the end of the First Carlist Was (1840) and the Revolution of 1868, there was a

---

[2]Antonio Oliveira Ramos, Politics, Economics and Men of Modern Spain: 1808-1946 (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946), pp. 46-47.

[3]Mariano José de Larra, An article in Revista Española, June 20, 1834, cited by Ramos, p. 19.

phenomenal increase in prosperity. "Throughout the 50's growth was steady, becoming spectacular in the 60's."[4] This recent economic activity was the foundation of the new business world. The Stock Exchange was created; banking centers emerged in Madrid, Barcelona, and Bilbao, with the banker gaining in social status. Speculation and credit became the watchwords of the hour. But the period was not unblemished. The 50's were filled with financial scandals, one of the most notorious of which was connected with the railway speculation of the Queen Mother.[5] Beside the speculators of the 50's and 60's the most imposing figures were successful generals. "The rewards of the military oligarchs were splendid and the genuine lack of class feeling in most regiments made the army an instrument of social mobility without equal in Europe."[6] Industrialists, traders, landowners, speculators, prosperous lawyers, and these generals, who were its political voice, constituted the unprecedented bourgeoisie.

The tremendous increase in prosperity and economic advancement of the later 50's and early 60's not only offered the impoverished nobility the opportunity to recover its lost riches but created a new social class, elevating it to a position of importance. This produced

---

[4]Raymond Carr, Spain 1808-1936 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 274.

[5]Carr, p. 281.

[6]Carr, pp. 282-283.

a mad race for wealth. Materialism and positivism became the cornerstones of their existence.

> All society strove for wealth; everything else was subordinate to the itch for accumulation. Honor, love, friendship, ideals, and self-respect were left behind in the desperate race for economic power and for the luxurious comforts which money could procure.[7]

However the economic acceleration of the preceding era could not maintain its feverish pace. A recession in Europe curtailed credit for an economy excessively dependent on foreign capital. Spain's entire credit structure was placed in peril. This, along with other economic problems, caused a setback in 1865. As a result of the crash of the Stock Exchange and the failure of rash development schemes some of the wealthy were ruined.[8]

During the period of political turmoil and uncertainty which resulted from the Revolution of 1868 and the events which immediately followed, Spain was still endeavoring to recover from this economic slump of 1865. Therefore, by 1874, the date of the Restoration, everyone welcomed political repose. Prosperity was on the rise again. The old blue-blood aristocracy and the nouveau riche, both of whom had reaped the economic benefits of the civil wars and mid-century expansion, the merchants and government officials who made fortunes in the Americas

---

[7]Leo Kirschenbaum, Enrique Gaspar and the Social Drama in Spain ("University of California Publications in Modern Philology," Vol. 25, No. 4; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1944), p. 344.

[8]Carr, p. 300.

and were now returning home, the officers of a top-heavy army, and a new generation of aggressive businessmen all wanted to enjoy their spoils in a tranquil country.[9] The quiet years of the Restoration saw a continuation of the ambitions of the earlier boom years. But it appears that the middle class was even more intensely avaricious, seeking distinction in social position and in the pettier, more materialistic things.[10]

The optimistic growth of this era was characterized by the same laxity of private and public morals seen before. This now appeared in the form of caciquismo, the boss system. The caciques controlled local politics and the national government was dependent upon their support. During the 1880's Spain managed to escape the depression that was sweeping the rest of Europe, but when the other countries had recovered she fell victim to the crisis. This, coupled with the Spanish American War which cost Spain her remaining colonies in 1898, made the last decade of the nineteenth century a trying one. But this last disaster, as Starkie says, "aroused the Spanish people."[11] Spain was desperately in need of economic reforms. The

---

[9]Ramos, p. 81.

[10]H. Chonon Berkowitz, Pérez Galdós, the Spanish Liberal Crusader (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1948), pp. 146-147.

[11]Walter F. Starkie, Modern Spain in Its Literature ("Rice Institute Pamphlet," Vol. 16, No. 2; Houston: n.n., 1929), p. 56.

country was on the road toward industrialization but in light of the strides made by other nations at that time her progress, with the exception of a few real improvements in Cataluña and Vizcaya, was merely a token advancement.[12] However, after 1898 tremendous improvements and changes began on all sides.

The nineteenth century in Spain had been marked by an advancement of liberal political programs, economic expansion of business and industry, the emergence of a middle class, and a gradual increase in democracy. This bourgeoisie had shown itself in prior years to be fanatically obsessed with the acquisition of this world's goods. But by the last decade of the century it had tempered its outlook and had achieved a balance, financial and otherwise. With a calmer approach to life came a sounder moral code, and as a class the bourgeoisie began to behave in a more normal fashion.

The nobility, traditionally accustomed to being served without reciprocating, often appeared to be lazy and slothful. The middle class had accomplished much in the line of financial independence, but it failed to attain the degree of efficiency and thrift which might be expected, considering its marked advancement in other ways. These were the major flaws in an otherwise encouraging social picture at the end of the nineteenth century.

---

[12]Ramos, p. 236.

CHAPTER II

SPANISH DRAMA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the opening of the nineteenth century the Spanish stage was dominated by the French neo-classic ideas which not only ran contrary to the inherent Spanish character but also failed in the preceding century to produce a meritorious literature worthy of the esteem accorded to the drama of the Golden Age. In the latter half of the eighteenth century a new note was injected in Spanish drama by Ramón de la Cruz. His sainetes, realistic, humorous, one-act satires of customs and folkways, were received with tremendous enthusiasm. Around the turn of the century Leandro Fernández de Moratín wrote some comedies of manners of the Alarcón-Molière tradition, casting them in a more clearly defined neo-classic mold than his predecessors in the genre. His drama contains the classic characteristics of sobriety, simplicity, good taste, measure, and observance of the unities of time, place and action. With comedy, Leandro achieved a success for neo-classicism which his father, Nicolás, had not been able to achieve with tragedy. The themes are based upon observation of contemporary society. He is essentially a writer of thesis drama, striving for

correction of antiquated and unrealistic practices in the life of his time. While in form he belongs to the eighteenth century, in theme and moral purpose of social reform he is definitely a member of the nineteenth century, for with him one finds the beginning of nineteenth century social drama.

With the exception of Moratín, who belongs in part to the preceding era, there is little noteworthy literature in Spain during the period of Ferdinand's reign. The majority of Spanish literary men were advocates of liberal beliefs. Therefore many were in forced or voluntary exile. Briefly in 1820, with the establishment of the Constitution, and again upon the death of Ferdinand in 1833, when a general amnesty was declared, these emigrados returned. They, along with the few men of letters who had remained in Spain in spite of rigid literary censorship, stimulated a revitalization of culture. Schools opened and newspapers started their presses anew. The theater, now free of its tight restrictions, began to flourish. Therefore it has justly been said that the nineteenth century, literary-wise, began in 1833.

The loss of support and interest for the French neo-classic literary movement came with the expulsion of Napoleon's forces in 1813. The later return of the emigrados from countries such as England, France, Italy, and Germany, which were now embued with Romanticism, resulted in a rebirth of the Spanish theater. Romanticism,

with its love of passion, sentimentalism, the exotic; and the idealization of the social outcast and self-made man, couched in eloquent lyric verse and colloquial prose, reigned on the Spanish stage for a decade and a half.

However, concurrently, there was another vital force in the theater. The Moratinian comedia de costumbres was being developed by playwrights who sought to depict life and manners of society around them. The classical doctrines adhered to by Moratín were gradually relaxed. Action became more rapid, dialogue was more lively, language more natural, observation and character depiction keener, humor and spontaneity more evident. The interest in deliberate moralizing or even in presenting a study of social problems waned. As the conspicuous didactic note disappeared, humorous satire of contemporary society unfolded in the Bretonian comedy of manners and the social satire of Ventura de la Vega.

As a foundation for a detailed study of materialism in the drama of the last half of the nineteenth century it is not amiss to take a brief look at the role played by the question of money in the drama of the years prior to 1850. In comedias de costumbres and romantic drama, wealth and concern for bienes económicos were not completely absent. Money had often been used with more or less prominence as a resorte dramático. The money premise, implied or stated, sometimes appears in seemingly incidental or subtle form. All this can best be demonstrated by presenting a brief,

selective resumé of some of the typical early plays of the century. This will show how and to what extent money or the lack of it pre-set conditions of the plot or strongly motivated the actions of the characters as the play unfolds.

El barón (1803) by Moratín. "A mother, obsessed with the idea of social position for herself and daughter, plays into the hands of an unscrupulous swindler who is exposed in the nick of time, leaving her free to marry a youth of her own choice."[1]

El sí de las niñas (1806) by Moratín. An impoverished widow living on charity arranges her young daughter's marriage with a wealthy older man in order to improve social and financial conditions. The daughter has fallen in love with his nephew. He wished to be loved for himself, not for his money, and has courted her under an assumed name. After various complications the uncle withdraws his suit to enable the young lovers to marry.

Contigo pan y cebolla (1833) by Gorostiza. A young girl filled with romantic notions rejects the proposal of the young man she loves because there is no obstacle to the marriage, as he is both well-to-do and acceptable to her father. To win her, the suitor feigns financial reverses while her father pretends to dislike him, whereupon she gladly elopes, living in abject poverty

---

[1]Lewis E. Brett, Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1935), p. 15.

until the progression of the plot makes all turn out well.

Muérete y verás (1837) by Bretón de los Herreros. A young man going off to war borrows money from a money lender but fails, through a series of circumstances, to sign the necessary papers. The money lender's concern over the repayment of the loan runs as a thread of comedy through the plot. An erroneous report that the hero has been killed prompts a false friend to produce a trumped-up will rather than allow the protagonist's possessions to revert to the state. The hero returns to the village to straighten out his entangled amorous and financial affairs and all ends happily.

Don Álvaro (1835) by Duque de Rivas. Don Álvaro loves the daughter of a marqués but marriage is forbidden on the grounds that the suitor is of unknown background and lacks high social rank, notwithstanding the apparent affluence of don Álvaro and the near-pauperism of the Marqués. The father accidentally receives a mortal wound when he tries to prevent the couple's elopement. This precipitates a chain of highly dramatic and tragic events culminating in the death of all major characters.

Los amantes de Teruel (1837) by Hartzenbusch. A young man with little money or position, having fallen in love with the daughter of a wealthier family, is sent away to establish himself before he can qualify for marriage. A series of complicated circumstances which prevent his returning at the specified time prompts the girl to marry

another. When he returns, the force of love results in the death of the lovers, and they are buried together.

Macías (1834) by Larra. Very similar in plot and motivation to the better known Los amantes de Teruel this play involves the daughter of a nobleman, a suitor who is a knight, and Macías, the girl's choice, who because of his lack of title or money is sent off for a one year plazo to fight the Moors. Believing him unfaithful, the heroine marries one day before the year lapses, with the expected tragic results.

By mid-century the effects of the political, economic, and social revolutions were being felt. New audiences were being created through the rise of a bourgeoisie. Literary criticism became more demanding and less tolerant of dramatic immaturity. The theater grew more commercialized and writers felt more and more impelled to please the public. Both audiences and authors were jaded by the excesses of Romanticism and the theater-goers were enjoying laughter at their own expense in the comedy of manners. The way had been led by those who had continued and modified the Moratinian style. Playwrights became primarily concerned with reflecting life of the present. They showed contemporary manners and morals, stressed the preoccupations of the rising middle class, and depicted its habits and vices. Realistic social thesis drama was emerging from its subordinate role of comedy whose primary purpose was to amuse and was now on

the verge of being the dominant trend in serious theatrical fare. Nevertheless, the mid-century transition drama was marked by eclecticism and gradual change. Dramatists saw no incongruity in using verse to discuss such unpoetic things as politics and the stock exchange, but they adhered increasingly to standards of truth, common sense, and good taste. They recognized that materialism and greed had become a driving force in everyday life and censured these vices. But this was done in superficial form, without condemning the principles of the capitalistic system or dealing in a realistic way with any basic social questions inherent in this changing society. Rather, they portrayed typical middle class characters and their immediate problems. They suggested the general social situation which their characters faced without finding any profound or logical answers. Although they permitted their people to express the most liberal, advanced ideas about their dramatic dilemma, the final solutions were arrived at in the traditional way of the old Spanish theater. That is, they used the conventional moral doctrines or passionate outbursts as the ultimate answer. This technique, though effective from the dramatic viewpoint, was not an authentic reflection of current social preoccupation. They were dramatists concerned with modern problems but not yet true social reformers.

This new trend in serious drama received impetus and guidance toward an authentic literature of social

reform from positivistic philosophy which gained widespread attention following the publication of Auguste Comte's Cours de philosophie positive (6 vols., 1839-1842). Comte's synthesis of the ideas of the nineteenth century philosophes and his extension of those ideas to social as well as natural sciences may be regarded as the foundation of Sociology. Positivism exerted its strongest influence on the naturalistic novel, a genre that enjoyed much greater vogue in France than in Spain. Nevertheless, it is generally recognized that positivism exercised a noteworthy influence on the social thesis drama of France during the latter half of the century. Since the appearance of Comte's Cours de philosophie positive coincided with the vacuum caused by the subsidence of romanticism from its dominant role and the search for new directions in the Spanish theater, it is reasonable to assume that positivism influenced the drama during and after this transition period either directly or indirectly through the plays of Augier and Dumas fils.

To this transition period belong Tamayo y Baus and López de Ayala. These two forceful dramatists who wrote concurrently are usually credited with bringing realism to the Spanish stage. It has often been pointed out that some of their later plays in which they attack materialism closely parallel those of their French contemporaries, Augier and Dumas fils, who were also dealing with the question of money in a similar fashion. Tamayo introduced

a more relaxed and natural note by writing his plays in prose. But Ayala, along with some lesser playwrights who followed, continued their poetic moralizing, "making it unnecessary for the devout to go to church," as Alcalá Galiano wrote in 1876,

> since it puts into the mouths of actors rhymed sermons, edifying homilies and treatises on domestic morality, very conducive to the happiness of families and peace among Christian princes.[2]

In the later 1860's another major figure in the person of Enrique Gaspar began contributing to the thesis drama in prose. As a direct result of the economic crash of 1865 a significant number of the moneyed classes lost financial security. The bourgeoisie had been establishing standards of living and social codes which demanded rigid observance. Now those who had suffered reduced financial circumstances employed every ingenious method to conceal this fact in their desire to adhere to these artificial social standards. This was the kind of thing that became a target for Gaspar's scathing criticism.

Writing of Gaspar's approach Kirschenbaum states:

> The mission of the modern dramatist . . . is to show society its defects: if society wishes, it may correct them, the fact that society may well care to do nothing of the kind is not of primary importance; what is important is that those who follow us should know us as we actually were . . . our faults, our problems, and the manner in which we ordinarily conducted our lives. Observation, therefore, should be the chief sustenance of the artist, who should

---

[2]José Alcalá Galiano, Revista Contemporánea, II (1876), 70, cited by Halfdan Gregersen, Ibsen and Spain (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1936), p. 33.

> intelligently immerse himself in contemporary life for the purpose of gathering living material.[3]

Despite the attention given by competent writers to the thesis drama, Romanticism still appeared in plays produced by such noted authors as García Gutiérrez in the 60's and Zorrilla in the following decade.

In the realistic 1860's there also appeared various kinds of one-act plays and vaudeville-type skits, known collectively as the género chico. They were enacted in Madrid coffee houses with such marked success that, in the latter part of the decade, a special theater was opened for their presentation. Known as the teatro por horas to suggest the time limitation of the performance (approximately one hour), this dramatic form increased in scope and audience appeal. The shortened playing time enabled more patrons to attend the performances at prices lower than those asked for full length plays. Although this genre has no significant bearing upon the serious drama of the period, it must have stimulated popular interest in theatrical attendance in general and therefore is worthy of mention.

In 1874 Echegaray brought a startling revival of flamboyant romanticism of a type which had been considered obsolete. For approximately twenty years he loomed unchallenged as the dominant Spanish dramatist of his time. Prolific in output, highly inventive in the creation of

---

[3]Kirschenbaum, p. 336.

elaborate plots, skilled in creating surprises, he knew what would please the public and gave them the scenic effects, the swift actions, and the violent suicides and murders they had been missing in the social drama. Regardless of the thesis he expounded, the problem was solved after an external fashion in the old trite and violent manner. "No other word more aptly describes the theater of Echegaray than melodramatic."[4]

Echegaray's supreme rule of the Spanish stage came to an end with the production of a more realistic play authored by Pérez Galdós, a writer who until 1892 had not been known as a dramatist. As early as 1885 he had suggested that audiences might prefer a less florid type of play than the prevailing melodramas of Echegaray. There also are other indications that theater-goers were influenced by the simpler dramatic style exhibited by visiting French and Italian theatrical companies, and were ready to accept a fresh breath of realism. But romantic playwrights, supported by a favorable press and a coterie of followers, continued to linger beyond their time, in a manner of speaking.[5]

> The moment was propitious for a courageous dramatist fired with the reformer's zeal to lay the foundation of a new dramatic style characterized by simplicity and naturalness. . . . Echegaray might have been that reformer had he recognized . . . that the historical

---

[4]Hal Carney, The Drama of Galdós (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska, 1951), p. 5.

[5]Berkowitz, pp. 233-237.

> drama of passion . . . must inevitably disappear, as well as the [his] contemporary drama which was modern only by virtue of the levita (Prince Albert coat) worn by the actors and which was basically alien to the spirit of the times in speech, sentiment, and human behavior. But Echegaray was clearly unaware of his great opportunity.[6]

With the advent of Galdós' social plays another step was taken in the development of modern drama. He presents a society where the aristocracy appears degenerate and lazy while the bourgeoisie now has become an admirable class though often inefficient and unthrifty. Characters and ideas are the dominating elements of his plays. He employs realism of the type used by the costumbristas, usually delegating its depiction to secondary characters and minor scenes.[7]

> The sincere study of reality was swept away by a combination of romanticism and symbolism which lifted the author into the realm of pure speculation, giving his work a universal philosophic value as it lost in the representation of life.[8]

Whereas his forerunners Tamayo and Ayala presented problems without supplying satisfactory solutions, Galdós goes a step beyond and proposes answers. Therefore he may well be labelled a true social reformer.

Three years following the first presentation of a Galdosean play, nineteenth century social thesis drama

---

[6]Berkowitz, p. 237.

[7]S. Griswold Morley, "Introduction" (to his edition of) Benito Pérez Galdós' Mariucha (New York: D. C. Heath and Co., 1921), p. xvi.

[8]Morley, p. xxvii.

reached its culmination with Joaquín Dicenta. His Juan José (1895) brought a proletarian theme with true socialistic implications to the Spanish stage. He attacked social injustice as he depicted the conflicts between the laboring class and the capitalists. Although Dicenta modeled his dramas upon those of Echegaray in that he employed violent passion and emotion, he is credited with being the initiator of Naturalism and the proletarian drama in Spain. Dicenta's dramas do not deal specifically with the topic of materialism as treated in this study. However this playwright cannot be overlooked, for with the appearance of Dicenta true social thesis drama burst forth upon the Spanish stage.

The study of nineteenth century drama may be considered to close with Galdós and Dicenta even though they continued to write in the early years of the new century. By the same token Jacinto Benavente, who more truly belongs to the following era, was contributing to the theater in the last decade before 1900 and deserves mention in this study.

Benavente is like many of his predecessors in that he wants to give a presentation of contemporary life. But he is credited with bringing new ideas to the theater. Asides and soliloquies are replaced in his plays by natural, ordinary dialogue. He desires to get away from romantic love stories and highly dramatic situations. Yet his plays are always thought provoking. The characters are

well defined and develop through their dialogues. Often, in contrast with earlier drama, the plot of the plays seems rather thin due to the fact that the audience is watching the characters live on stage. They are the play rather than complicated situations or rapid action, both of which are usually lacking in his works.

Benavente desires to show that the new, wealthy society of the last decade of the nineteenth century is corrupt and egotistical. He displays a disdain lacking in the works of Tamayo and Ayala. He lacks the optimism and reformer's zeal of Galdós. Nevertheless he does not moralize or impose dogmatic ideas upon his audience. He endeavors to be the neutral observer and the final solution is left to the imagination of the audience.

For the purpose of this study we are concerned with three of his first plays written between 1894 and the turn of the century. These are satirical plays in which he portrays the rich bourgeoisie and the aristocracy of Madrid.

El nido ajeno (1894) is a play which is reminiscent of José Echegaray's El gran galeoto. Gossip mongers fabricate tales which cause a husband unfounded jealousy and force a lonely man to leave a home which has provided him with the first true security he has known. Benavente points out here that the possession of money does not guarantee happiness and that dedication to its acquisition has its undesirable side effects. Neither of the men in

the play is miserly or avaricious. Yet their preoccupation with business has resulted in terrible loneliness for one and ill health for the other.

Gente conocida (1896) depicts the hypocrisy, corruption, and decadence of the new aristocracy of Madrid. We witness the maneuverings of this financially and socially ambitious class. An excellent description of the tenor of the play is seen in the following excerpt. A young Duque tells his mother,

> en tus tiempos, la aristocracia deslumbraba con el brillo de sus títulos. Hoy, un título lo tiene cualquiera; se dan y se venden por nada, y al que tiene dinero y lo sabe gastar, nadie le pregunta de dónde ha venido. Ya verás a Montes, una vez casado con Petra, mujer distinguida; dirigido por ella, será más estimado en todo Madrid que nosotros; su casa será un centro de reunión más distinguido que la nuestra, y su hija, esa hija natural, heredera de un capital inmenso, se casará ... con quien ella quiera, con el más linajudo, con el más aristócrata ..., ¡conmigo, si me conviene![9]

At the end of the play this illegitimate daughter refuses to marry a man she does not love and she chooses not to become a pawn of the ambitious.

Benavente states in the autocrítica written the day after the estreno of this play,

> si alguna idea moral hubiera en el fondo de la obra, es esa. La aristocracia de la habilidad, del talento, de la política, digámoslo así, se burla, juega con la aristocracia de raza y con la del dinero; las explota a su antojo; pero con la aristocracia individual, con la mujer sola, pero fuerte, con la única conciencia

---

[9]Jacinto Benavente, Comedias escogidas (3rd ed.; Madrid: Aguilar, S.A. de Ediciones, 1964), p. 120.

> despierta entre tantas conciencias dormidas, nada puede.[10]

La comida de las fieras (1898) portrays a wealthy young couple which is brought to financial ruin and is forced to sell all they own. Their friends pounce like wild beasts as they shamelessly delight in buying the couple's possessions cheaply. They then belittle, scorn, and ignore the victims who are forced to flee the country in order to start life anew. Hipólito, the husband, laments their economic difficulties and asks his wife why they didn't go to America where a man is worth something. There he could start over again but in Europe it is futile to struggle. In America wealth is a means rather than an end as it is in Europe. Here wealth is ease, in America, activity.

> These words of Hipólito sum up the author's view as put forward in these early plays; he wants to complete the work initiated by the great Pérez Galdós, to turn the eyes of Spain on itself. New ideas must be imported, new activities must gradually drive out the whole mass of antiquated conventions upheld by an unstable society.[11]
>
> In the optimism of Galdós's La loca de la casa and Voluntad we see a great contrast to the decadent pessimism of the early Benaventian plays. Both writers saw the same problems, but the one set out at once to prescribe a cure for the ills, the other showed the nature of the disease, distrusting in his powers of healing.[12]

In these plays Benavente, like other members of

---

[10]Benavente, pp. 95-96.

[11]Walter Starkie, Jacinto Benavente (London: The Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 50.

[12]Starkie, Jacinto Benavente, p. 54.

the new generation, is endeavoring to arouse Spain. He hopes to awaken in her a renewed sense of values and honor which will at least set her on the road to moral betterment.

Trends and events which form the background for Spanish drama of the 1800's have been explored. Also an indication of the treatment of materialism by a twentieth century writer has been given. It now remains to examine specific plays of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER III

MANUEL TAMAYO Y BAUS

Manuel Tamayo y Baus (1829-1898) was born into a theatrical family and under this influence began writing dramas at an early age. His most significant period of literary production, however, began at mid-century and lasted only twenty years. Like so many others, he tried his hand at numerous types of dramatic writing: classical, romantic, and historical dramas; comedies of manners and social thesis plays. His masterpiece, Un drama nuevo (1867), has been called "uno de los dramas más originales en las historia del teatro español."[1] His most important contribution to the theater as a whole, one which helped alter the course of Spanish drama, was the study of social and moral problems of his time.

Tamayo, very much aware of the economic and social changes taking place around him, became concerned with the vices, immorality and materialistic attitudes of his contemporaries. In the belief that drama could and should serve a more useful purpose than merely providing

---

[1]Melissa Annis Cilley, El teatro español: Las épocas en el desarrollo del drama (Madrid: Blass, S.A., 1934), p. 140.

an evening's entertainment, he endeavored to renovate the theater by applying his talents to the creation of realistic plays of decided moral intent. In his prologue to Ángela (1852) Tamayo said:

> Pero juzgo necesario, para que el drama ofrezca interés, hacer el retrato moral del hombre con todas sus deformidades, si las tiene, y emplearlo como instrumento de la Providencia para realizar ejemplos de provechosa enseñanza. En el estado en que la sociedad se encuentra es preciso llamar al camino de la regeneración, despertando en ella el germen de los sentimientos generosos.[2]

A keenly observant man, Tamayo presented in his social thesis plays an accurate picture of current customs and attitudes. Regarding his concept of this realistic portrayal in the drama we have the author's own statement.

> Ni todo lo que es verdad en el mundo cabe en el teatro. La ficción escénica dejará de ser bella, y pecará además de falsa cuando represente lo raro y no lo natural, la excepción y no la regla ... el arte debe elegir, con detenido examen, de entre los elementos que juntos y mezclados aparecen en la realidad ... ofrecer al alma un espectáculo siempre sublime de sí misma en imágenes siempre claras y vigorosas, condensando y depurando la realidad, sin alterarla ni desfigurarla, amalgamando lo bello con lo verdadero.[3]

Tamayo considered lyrical verse, in vogue at the time, a hindrance to the depiction of truth and the psychological analysis of characters. To lend a more realistic tone he turned to prose as the means of

---

[2]Neale H. Tayler, Las fuentes del teatro de Tamayo y Baus (Madrid: n.n., 1959), p. 20.

[3]Manuel Tamayo y Baus, Obras completas, p. 1136, cited by Ramón Esquer Torres, El teatro de Tamayo y Baus (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1965), p. 142.

expression. This was instrumental in producing the naturalness, simplicity, and conciseness which characterize his dramas of ideas.

He limited the number of characters to the fewest possible to avoid complicated, unrealistic situations and to enable a fuller character study. Action was simple. He wished to create true-to-life events, not using more resortes than those offered in reality, and to develop them naturally. While in intent these dramas were new, in style they leaned more and more toward the classical.

Tamayo's characters were real, living people who aroused sympathy from the audience. His depth of observation and insight are especially evident in his female characters, for through them he shows his profound understanding of the human heart and its emotions. It is interesting that in all but two of the total number of his plays women are major characters, and in each drama they are portrayed with the same fine, delicate touch.

In Tamayo's social dramas one notes a change in tone from the humorous to the tragic.[4] The same type of progression is evident in his moralizing. The didactic note of his first two plays was never soathing and bitter, but his later sermonizing became quite uncompromising. His last drama[5] was received with such hostility that one

---

[4]Brett, p. 644.

[5]Los hombres de bien, 1870.

wonders if this had any influence on the abrupt termination of his literary career.

In essence Tamayo y Baus' thesis dramas represent a struggle between good and evil, the denunciation of vice and the praise of truth and virtue. His attacks on the ills of society, and the individuals who comprise it, and the development of his plots always revolve around some sound moral precept which he wishes to bring to the attention of his audience.

From the works of this prolific and versatile playwright, Hija y madre (1855) and Lo positivo (1862) have been selected for this study. While the former is a relatively unknown drama which can best be labeled a romantic play, the resorte dramático is financial and social in nature, and the work as a whole shows a transition from earlier romanticism to the emerging realistic social thesis drama. Lo positivo, one of Tamayo's better known offerings, is recognized, along with Ayala's El tanto por ciento, as one of the early attacks upon the materialism of the times.

HIJA Y MADRE[6]

In this play the widowed Condesa intends to marry

---

[6] Hija y madre, a three act drama in prose, was first presented May 19, 1855, at the Teatro del Príncipe in Madrid.

a wealthy duke so as to be able to satisfy her debts and insure her continued prominence in society. The day before the wedding she is offered information about her missing daughter who was kidnapped eight years previously. The Condesa is then confronted by her father Andrés. He has been searching for his daughter ever since she abandoned him and their humble life eleven years before. The Condesa denies his parental claim lest her background be known and she lose her coveted position and anticipated wealth. This horrifies María, Andrés' young companion. It is revealed that María is the Condesa's daughter. The girl refuses to accept her mother's affection and the Condesa for the first time comprehends the suffering of a rejected parent. She then reassesses her values and denounces her false standards. She also acknowledges her father, begs his forgiveness and wins her daughter's love.

This is a drama of transition, a link between the prevalent romantic drama of the first half of the nineteenth century and the realistic social thesis plays of the second fifty years. Tamayo tended to base his thesis dramas on some sound moral precept and this play is based upon the commandment Honor thy father and thy mother. The vanity and greed of a materialistic woman were the causal factors in the protagonist's failure to observe this basic principle. The play tends toward the classical in preservation of the unities. Yet it has many characteristics of romantic drama though there are accents

of truth and reality.

This drama was written in prose because the author felt this medium lent more credibility and reality to the play. However the implausible and unlikely circumstances and events which are used to develop the plot tend to cancel some of the realistic effect, as do the starkly black or white delineations of character.

Fate and circumstances are all-important in this work. Without them there would be no dramatic crisis. The kidnapper's identity has always been known and he has been diligently but unsuccessfully sought for eight years. Now, on the day before the wedding, he voluntarily enters the scene with news of the Condesa's lost daughter. The pretext upon which he bases his desire to give the Condesa this information is far from realistic: his ailing mother's plea that he give up his life of crime has touched him so deeply that he wishes the Condesa to seek a royal pardon for him. The fact that he has been hunted for years without being captured weakens the case for plausibility even further. He will not reveal his knowledge as to the whereabouts of the Condesa's daughter unless the pardon is granted. Therefore, the responsibility for the Condesa's recovery of her child and the resolution of the play lies in the hands of the king. This is reminiscent of many Golden Age dramas in which salvation rested with the king.

There are further circumstantial and unlikely

elements regarding the girl's disappearance. A few hours after Ruiz and his band of men had kidnapped the girl a lone man had taken her from them. Years later Ruiz has chanced upon the pair and recognized them. The greatest coincidence must surely be suspected by the audience before proof is given in the last scene. This is that the lone man was Andrés and the girl he took, unbeknownst to him, was his own granddaughter.

Fate again plays its role with the timely arrival of Andrés and María. The former eagerly pours out his pathetic story. When he was a child he didn't know his parents but was reared in Galicia by gypsies from whom he eventually fled. Later in life his wife died in childbirth. When his daughter was seventeen years old she abandoned him, running off with an unknown caballero. One day at the seashore he saw his daughter embark upon a boat and sail away. He swam after her, of course never reaching his goal. From then on his days have been spent in fruitless searching.

In this short flashback we have many romantic elements: unknown parentage; the mysterious, exotic aspects associated with gypsy life and the Galician region which is recognized for its wealth of legend and folklore; the youthful noble of unknown origin who captures the love of a beautiful peasant girl and takes her off to share an unknown future together; and the dramatic, pathetic search for this man's missing daughter

which is symbolically anticipated by his futile pursuit of the vanishing ship.

The Condesa represents the epitome of careless and wasteful spending, ambition, selfishness, false pride, and greed. We learn in the play that her first marriage to the rich Conde was a marriage for love. However after having been introduced to the wealthy and influential social circles the Condesa became intoxicated by the luxury and status that money afforded her. Upon her husband's death the Condesa received only a small pension since the major portion of his estate was inherited legally by his blood relatives. The Condesa soon squandered her limited but adequate sum. Unable to accept a less luxurious life, she has now contracted for a marriage with a man whom she neither loves nor respects except for what he can give her. She denies her father, denounces her background, lies to her friends, belittles paternal suffering caused by her rejection, and scoffs at those who point out the evil of her ways.

Teresa, the Condesa's maid, condemns her mistress' attitude. She suggests calling off the wedding and returning with Andrés to their homeland. The Condesa replies: "¿He de bajar voluntariamente desde la altura en que me hallo a tan hondo abismo? ¡Cómo se burlarían de mí

las ilustres damas que ahora me envidian!"[7]

Her attitudes and resulting behavior are not products of her inherent nature nor her upbringing. Rather they are symptoms of the illness that has infected certain segments of contemporary society of which she has become a part. The acquisition of money is her primary goal. Principles of honor, love, and friendship become secondary when they hinder its attainment. The Condesa is basically aware of her wrongdoing. She strives to justify herself and make apology for her behavior. Though at times she is desirous of changing her ways she lacks the necessary courage to do so. However at the last she truly repents. She renounces money and all that it represents as she finally realizes the full power of love and filial duty.

If the Condesa personifies the evils and ills of materialistic society, María is the embodiment of truth and goodness. She has a deep feeling of love and gratitude toward Andrés and is more than contented with her vagabond life of begging, in spite of the fact that she fears the loss of his affection once his true daughter is found. She considers the Condesa and all that she represents as loathsome and repeats,"¡Qué pícara es esa mujer!" When Luis befriends María and her companion and offers two

---

[7]Manuel Tamayo y Baus, Obras de don Manuel Tamayo y Baus (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadereyra, 1898-1900), Vol. IV, p. 51.

reales for their music, she tries to return them, saying that it is too much. In the last scenes the Condesa offers money to her departing father but María refuses it on his behalf. She vows to work to support them both and tells the Condesa to keep it for whatever she needs! When it is learned that María is the Condesa's daughter she says, "¿Qué pecado he cometido yo para que sea mi madre esta mujer?"[8] Andrés tells her that she will be rich, but she replies that she doesn't care for money. She wants to stay with Andrés and continue leading the life she has always known.

Andrés, an incredibily pathetic figure, is obsessed by one thing only--the recovery of his daughter. He cares nothing for wealth and luxury and demonstrates little concern for obtaining funds necessary to maintain even the simplest standards of living. He is willing to suffer unimaginable humiliations after finding the Condesa. He even goes so far as to suggest that he stay there as one of her servants, just so as to be near her. He refuses his daughter's offers of financial assistance, not from a sense of pride but merely because money is of so little importance to him. At the end he realizes he may be doing María an injustice by having her remain with him and work to support them, and he suggests that she stay with her mother. He is aware that money can give her a better life

---

[8]Tamayo, p. 101.

and is willing to make a sacrifice and lose someone very dear to him if she is attracted by her mother's mode of living.

Teresa is the raisonneur, the critic. In the initial scene she points out to the Condesa that prudence in the handling of money was the answer to her problems rather than marrying for wealth. She criticizes her mistress for her vanity and whimsical extravagance which have placed her in the present precarious financial situation. If she had been content to live within her means and not compete in social circles where wealth insures status, it would not be necessary for her to commit this "imprudent act." Teresa had encouraged the Condesa's elopement with her first husband whom she loved, but she now condemns this second marriage for it is one of speculation. She finds the Duque filled with conceit. This is a common characteristic in these plays among those who are motivated by the acquisition of money.

After Andrés' appearance Teresa cannot condone her mistress' attitude. She tells her that it is impossible to go on hiding the truth and that rather than marry the Duque she should return with her father to their land. Through loyalty to her mistress she agrees to pretend not to recognize Andrés, but the Condesa's attitudes and actions are against Teresa's principles. As the voice of the author she points out to both the protagonist and the audience the evil influence that the

desire for money has brought to bear upon the Condesa.

The character of the Duque is not revealed in depth. Early in the play the audience is told that he is wealthy and conceited, thereby establishing his essential shallowness. Though his appearances are few, in each one he consistently shows himself to be cold, unsympathetic, and lacking in sensitivity. He demonstrates no compassion toward Andrés and María and chides Luis for befriending them. Upon hearing Andrés' story he retorts, "Hoy llueven niños perdidos."[9]

This man who is the personification of money never speaks a warm word to the woman he is to marry. In the final scene the Condesa reveals the identities of Andrés and María and indicates her decision to call off the marriage and return home with her father. The Duque's replies to her statements are limited to interjections "¡Ah!" and "¡Eh!" In addition to being a tool of the Condesa in her scheme to attain wealth, he shows himself to be the embodiment of undesirable characteristics which the author seems to indicate are inherent in an avaricious, conceited individual.

Luis, companion of the Duque, is noble both in rank and character, although he lacks the financial status of his friend. He is the one to whom the Condesa turns for help and advice. He tells the Condesa that he loves

---

[9]Tamayo, p. 33.

her and wishes he had the money she needs to pay her debts, for then he could feel justified in asking for her hand. He is the sole person who offers Andrés and María friendship and compassion. He is the one who has everything to gain and nothing to lose by revealing to the Duque the identity of these two. Yet his love and loyalty to the Condesa prevent his doing anything which he thinks would mar her happiness. He is the paragon of virtue, a man of sensitivity and generosity--the ideal gentleman. While Teresa is a member of the lower class who serves as the raisonneur, Luis is the democratic and perfect noble who urges the audience to adopt standards other than those artificial ones held dear by the status- and money-seekers. One of the best examples of his philosophy is this exhortation to the Duque in reference to the latter's dealing with Andrés and María. "Mire usted, Duque: no todos tienen medio para gozar en el mundo, pero corazón para amar y padecer a nadie le falta."[10]

For the first time in his drama Tamayo has brought to the stage a contemporary play with a truly social purpose. His two-fold thesis is both social and moral. He depicts and denounces the materialistic, socially corrupt wealthy upper stratum and speaks out for adherence to the commandment Honor thy father and thy

---

[10]Tamayo, p. 38.

mother. He offers no solution to the social problem. He merely suggests the preventive measure which the Condesa should have taken which was employment of caution and prudence in the handling of her money. As a result of her infection by the prevalent materialistic disease she failed to observe this law of God. If her first "denial" of her father was forgivable because it was committed as a result of marital love and her desire to establish a family of her own, her second is not. In this instance her father represents a love denied and rejected because he is a hindrance to her impending marriage and the fulfillment of her avaricious, selfish goals.

While this play is considered to be of relatively secondary literary merit, it is extremely important in the history of the theator. It indicates the changing trend from romantic drama toward realistic social thesis plays and foreshadows the type of drama that was soon to prevail on the Spanish stage.

LO POSITIVO[11]

Rafael, returning from the wars, still loves and hopes to marry his cousin and childhood sweetheart,

---

[11] Lo positivo, a three act play in prose, was first performed on October 25, 1862, in the Teatro de Lope de Vega, Madrid.

Cecilia. She, in view of her father's obsession for wealth and luxury--lo positivo--favors a wealthy suitor, Muñoz. Essentially, the drama is a process of change in Cecilia's attitude and her standard of values, in the course of which she abandons her father's standard of materialism and comes to recognize the greater importance of moral qualities, integrity of character, generosity, and love as lo positivo. This progress of change is effected by the experiences of friends of hers who do not actually appear on stage. One friend has married for money and is wealthy and miserable. Another has married for love and is poor but happy. Her uncle, a marqués, serves as the raisonneur or the author's mouthpiece and is instrumental in changing Cecilia's attitude and eventually in reuniting the childhood sweethearts, Rafael and Cecilia.

Lo positivo may be considered one of Spain's finest comedies of manners. In this play Tamayo's purpose was to attack the demoralizing greed for wealth and material things, the prevailing spirit of the period which induced some people to seek marriage for money rather than for love. A very minor thesis is also that which is similar to Moratín's El sí de las niñas: a girl should be allowed to choose her own husband. This is the second of Tamayo's dramas based upon marriage for speculation. It presents a more realistic and detailed picture of contemporary society than Hija y madre. However the

romantic and melodramatic notes are not entirely absent.

Rafael has just returned from fighting in Africa, a plot device very reminiscent of romantic dramas of the nineteenth century. When he is criticized by Cecilia's father, Pablo, for having gone to war, as this action did not render any financial advantages, the youth defends his noble deed by saying, "Usted olvida, tío, que yo fuí a pelear por mi religión, por mi patria y por mi reina."[12] Further romantic elements are found in the interpolated accounts of the extremely tragic or ideally blissful lives of Eduardo, Elena, and Luisa, friends of Rafael and Cecilia. We also find a degree of plot maneuvering based on chance: the timely arrival of letters and appearance of newspaper articles, the coincidental encounter of Cecilia's brother and his former fiancée after a long separation, and Rafael's convenient inheriting which provides opportunity for character reform.

It is important to realize that only four characters appear on stage--Cecilia, Rafael, Pablo, and the Marqués--although others who are never seen have vital roles in the development of the plot. While this play is almost completely original to the author, it was inspired by León Laya's French comedy, Le Duc Job.[13] The eleven characters of the latter were reduced to four by Tamayo,

---

[12]Tamayo, p. 303.

[13]Tamayo states this in his introduction to the play. Tamayo, p. 289.

which indicates the Spanish author's individual treatment of the common basic theme.

Cecilia represents the desire for wealth and worldly goods. She believes that there is a direct ratio between the amount of money one has and his degree of happiness. Yet except for this misguided notion she is a gracious, considerate, and lovable young woman. At the outset Cecilia is shallow in ideas, conforming to sophisticated social patterns. Obsessed by money, she intends to contract a financially advantageous marriage. This flaw in her character is the result of her heeding the maxims of her father, a worshipper of the golden calf. While she is not altogether pleased with her wealthy suitor Muñoz, she does not dismiss the possibility of marrying this man her father has chosen for her. He is a most estimable person--he has money! And this is lo positivo. "Y ahora las muchachas estamos por lo positivo."[14] Nevertheless throughout her conversations regarding Muñoz, Cecilia quotes her father's attitudes toward marriage and toward the prospective husband, indicating that she herself is not wholly convinced that he is right in suggesting a marriage for speculation. However, Cecilia is delighted by Pablo's assurance that within six years Muñoz will become one of the strongest and most influential bankers in Madrid, and she envisions

---

[14]Tamayo, p. 311.

herself competing in luxury with the most elegant women of the aristocracy. A letter from her friend Luisa and her own exposure to Rafael's presence begin to weaken her will, and her jealousy is aroused when the Marqués leads her to believe that Rafael is interested in an obscure country girl. Although she still finds it difficult to abandon her idea of lo positivo, she begins to try to harmonize her love interest with lo positivo. The Marqués encourages her in this effort.

As Cecilia recognizes the depth of her feeling toward Rafael she considers the possibility of sacrificing a few of the luxuries she previously anticipated enjoying. She writes down the total of their combined incomes and prepares what she considers the most stringent of budgets, including an allowance for guests, clothes, jewelry, carriages, a box at the theater, baths in the summer, and a little trip abroad. She then says, "Me parece que no he podido estar más económica y ahorrativa,"[15] when she realizes that their expenditures would exceed their resources by more than 6,000 duros. There is a surprising note when she reworks her budget which again fails to balance properly. She pares down her own expenses but not those of Rafael, displaying an admirable degree of unselfishness. When the Marqués inadvertently reads her budget he says with dismay, "¡Esto es el amor de una hija

---

[15]Tamayo, p. 351.

del siglo XIX!"[16]

Realizing that a marriage with Rafael is impractical without more money, Cecilia asks the Marqués if he can secure employment of a suitable sort for Rafael. She suggests a position as a director or preferably an undersecretary since the latter job includes use of a carriage. When the Marqués points out that there might be no vacancies, her solution is to fire someone, remarking that this is done every day.

If Cecilia has come around to more modern ways of thinking, Rafael has not. As the Marqués points out, Rafael would rather beg than work because of his extreme pride. Even after Cecilia learns that Rafael has become further impoverished through stock market losses, she is still willing to marry him, hoping that her father will provide housing and frequent meals. When Pablo finally gives rather grudging consent to Cecilia's choice of a husband, the Marqués points out that Rafael's pride might prevent his accepting her, since her dowry of a million duros will exceed his own wealth. Cecilia says in that case she will beg her father to give her share to her brother Felipe so that money will not come between them. Upon hearing this the Marqués asks Cecilia if she is no longer for lo positivo, and she answers, "Sí, señor; lo

---

[16]Tamayo, p. 359.

positivo es el amor y la virtud."[17] If the audience has any qualms as to the extent of her reform these are dispelled in the final scene when the happy lovers renounce a great portion of Rafael's newly inherited wealth and plan to live henceforth on moderate means.

Rafael immediately captures the sympathy of the audience for his unrequited constancy in love and his generosity. To save an old friend from debtors' prison Rafael had lent him a substantial sum without any expectation of being repaid. Because of this Pablo accuses his nephew of being improvident like his father and squandering his money, but the Marqués praises his deed. In contrast to his rival, Rafael has no aptitude for money-making nor desire to involve himself in gainful employment. He clings instead to the old ways of living on inherited, titled money however small the amount. As the Marqués says, his pride would prevent his working; he'd beg first. But circumstances work a change. He makes an unsuccessful effort to invest in the stock market. Then he decides that it may be wise to cultivate Muñoz' friendship and learn something of business practices from him. So the author gradually turns him from a rather unrealistic individual into a more practical man, still preserving his admirable qualities.

Pablo plans a marriage of speculation not only for

---

[17]Tamayo, p. 396.

Cecilia but also for his son Felipe, whose presence in the drama is felt but never seen. However, he is not so villainous as to force these alliances; he merely encourages them. His concept of a proper marriage is one based upon money. He considers love to be an invention of a poor and vagabond people in obscure times that no longer bears validity. That he does not ever alienate Cecilia during his advocacy of Muñoz as a husband and does finally consent to her marrying Rafael demonstrate that he is not the complete villain. Pablo's essential integrity is shown by his recognition with approval of the fact that Rafael had not used underhanded means to obtain money.

The Marqués is the confidant, philosopher, advisor, and commentator. In his numerous long speeches he chides Pablo regarding his ideas of marriage and applauds Rafael's generosity with money. To Cecilia he says that with money one can found a fine house but not necessarily a happy family. It is he who encourages Cecilia's love for Rafael by inventing tales of a rival to arouse her jealousy. He regards Rafael's desire to earn money as nonsense, thinking it is preferable for Cecilia to resign herself to living on Rafael's present income. Thus he makes it apparent to the audience that although working for money might be condoned, he for one would not encourage it. Through him Tamayo attacks the prevailing social evils of the times.

Without ever appearing on stage, Muñoz, the stock-broker-banker, becomes very important to the progression

of the play. Rich, successful, pompous, somewhat corpulent, he displays characteristics typical of the successful, egotistical businessman. Cecilia considers him a genius because he has tripled his fortune in little more than two years. (One of many such geniuses in Madrid, Rafael observes.) His emotions for Cecilia seem not to be very deep, for he switches from Juana to her and back again. He is vacillating between the good credit rating of Cecilia's father which he can lean upon and the four million _duros_ in cash represented by Juana's dowry. In fact Cecilia remarks that he loves her only as a businessman can, not as a store clerk or a poet. His place as a slightly comic figure is secure when his portrait is described, for he has had the rings, watch chain, tie pin, cuff links, and jacket buttons illuminated the better to impress the beholder with his wealth. Tamayo seemingly enjoys his little joke lampooning this type of businessman.

Disregarding the few circumstantial events used as dramatic devices and the romantic touches which appear within the play, we find that this is not a drama of exceptional nor exaggerated situations. While Tamayo again attacks avarice, his presentation of this social evil and its victims is offered within a more plausible and credible framework than that of _Hija y madre_. _Lo positivo_, unlike _Hija y madre_, presents multi-faceted characters with both their virtues and vices delineated. The author is more outspoken against the corruptive positivism with

which Pablo has imbued his children. He emphasizes the didactic lesson with greater force through the characters' monologues and debates. Seemingly he fears the moral is less obvious here than in his earlier thesis drama, whose characters are black or white, not gray. In Lo positivo, as in Hija y madre, the only practical solution to the problem of money-madness is the proper management, without undue extravagance, of what one already has. Being a religious man, Tamayo further moralizes as he commends Rafael's generosity in Lo positivo. He says that stocks better than those held in railroads and mines can be purchased from a banker (God) who gives the greatest interest of all. This interest sometimes is partially paid in this life though more often in the hereafter.

As a social thesis drama, this work ranks among the best early realistic plays of decided moral intent. In addition to its other merits, Lo positivo reflects with charm and clarity the everyday life of the upper segment of Spanish society of that time.

CHAPTER IV

ADELARDO LÓPEZ DE AYALA

Adelardo López de Ayala (1828-1879), a well known statesman and orator, is often associated with Tamayo y Baus. These two close friends, who began writing plays at about the same time, are credited with the inauguration of social thesis drama in Spain. While both had the intention of criticizing society with an eye toward improving it, Ayala was much more insistent upon moralizing in his plays. He felt so strongly about the need to point out the sins of society that he even went so far as to introduce his ideas regarding social and moral problems in his earlier historical dramas.

In the prologue to Un hombre de Estado (1851) he states:

> He procurado en este mi primer ensayo, y procuraré lo mismo en cuanto salga de mi pobre pluma, desarrollar un pensamiento moral, profundo y consolador. Todos los hombres desean ser grandes y felices; pero todos buscan esta grandeza y esta felicidad en las circunstancias exteriores, es decir, procurándose aplausos, fortuna y elevados puestos. A muy pocos les ha ocurrido buscarlos donde exclusivamente se encuentran: en el fondo del corazón, venciendo las pasiones y equilibrando los deseos con los medios de satisfacerlos, sin comprometer la tranquilidad.[1]

---

[1]Brett, p. 643.

In spite of the strong moral tendency of Ayala's social dramas he received greater popular approbation than Tamayo. The straightforward, didactic prose of Tamayo's last thesis plays[2] apparently angered the audience which recognized itself a little too clearly as the recipient of his admonishing blows. But Ayala's comedies were written in verse, a skillfully composed and exquisitely polished verse which did not startle nor offend. And it is due in part to this mastery of poetic craftsmanship, which prevented his moralizing from becoming banal, that has also caused him to be compared to Ruíz de Alarcón.

Because of his meticulous attention to detail, Ayala wrote his plays only after careful thought and study. He composed them in prose before putting them in verse form to avoid the inclusion of elements that might be irrelevant or unjustified. Yet he did not refine and overwork his plays to the extent that they lost their warmth and human touch. In fact one often finds a note of sentimentality.

Like his colleague, Ayala had a keen sense of awareness. This is noted in the well observed realistic detail of his dramas. He strove to create a logical, natural effect, selecting subject matter, situations, and people that were to be found within the realm of truth. He also had an inventive mind but always maintained a good

---

[2] Lances de honor (1863) and Los hombres de bien (1870).

balance between reason and imagination, never exceeding the bounds of good taste. His plots are clear-cut and never forced in order to point up his thesis; this was not always true of Tamayo.[3]

Ayala's good oberservation is again noted in the creation of his characters. They are accurate and credible, but not profound. While they often impress with their reality, they nevertheless lack the individuality that would make them something other than mere types.

As in Tamayo's thesis dramas, there is in Ayala's plays a change from the humorous tone of his first works to a more tragic note in those of later years. But unlike Tamayo, Ayala did not become overly aggressive in his preaching, and his last play is considered the finest of all he wrote.

The comedy of manners of Bretón de los Herreros and particularly the humorous contemporary satire of Ventura de la Vega had led the way toward this social drama of lofty tone and purpose. While Tamayo y Baus was instrumental in bringing this new type of comedy to the stage, it was López de Ayala who truly created and developed this genre which he called alta comedia.

El tanto por ciento (1861) and Consuelo (1878),

---

[3]J. Hunter Peak, Social Drama in Nineteenth Century Spain (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1964), p. 57.

two plays which contributed to the fame of their author, are included here because of their harsh attacks upon materialism and the love of money. The fact that there is a span of seventeen years between these plays would tend to indicate the continuing prevalence of these social ills and the seriousness with which Ayala viewed them.

EL TANTO POR CIENTO[4]

Pablo, in love with the wealthy Condesa, gives his word to buy a quinta she admires but then learns that he is financially ruined. As a man of honor who must fulfill an obligation he turns to a usurer for the money. He offers a dehesa as collateral and Roberto eagerly buys it a carta de gracia.[5] He knows its value will greatly increase when a proposed canal is constructed nearby. Roberto hopes to keep the young lovers apart and thereby prevent Pablo's securing money from the Condesa to reclaim his land. To do so he enlists the aid of Petra, her husband Gaspar, and the servants of Pablo and the Condesa,

---

[4] El tanto por ciento, a three act drama in verse, was first presented in the Teatro del Príncipe, May 18, 1861.

[5] A carta de gracia is a financial arrangement whereby a sale of property is made with the provision that within a predetermined time the seller may return the purchase price to the buyer, or usurer, and retain title to his original property with neither party suffering a penalty. Failure to pay by the stipulated deadline results in immediate consummation of the sale.

Sabino and Ramona, offering them all a share in the profits. The play is a series of schemes and maneuvers initiated by this group for the purpose of increasing their own fortunes at the expense of the honorable names and happiness of the young couple. Finally as Roberto endeavors to out-scheme his accomplices and to win the Condesa and her fortune for himself, the plot is foiled, the debt is paid in time, and the lovers, whose characters are proven honorable, are reunited.

This play is frequently linked with Tamayo's Lo positivo by literary critics who consider these two works to be the first important treatments of the money question. El tanto por ciento, which antedates Lo positivo by one year, was received with astounding popularity. A. K. Shields says it was "the play of the moment, and in fact the only first rate performance of the year."[6]

El tanto por ciento is a comedy of noble love and a criticism of positivism of the era. The protagonists are victims of money illness but they ultimately achieve happiness and triumph over evil. There are few signs of romanticism though a note of sentimentality pervades in the Condesa's lacrymose and heart-rending speeches. Yet the plot development is aided by fortunate timing in the

---

[6]A. K. Shields, Adelardo López de Ayala and the Spanish Stage (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina, 1930), p. 13.

arrival of a letter, chance meetings, misunderstandings, and circumstantial interpolation of newspaper articles.

To discuss such mundane subjects as canal construction, stock exchanges, and governmental subsidies in verse may seem a bit ludicrous to twentieth century readers. However at that time verse was wholly acceptable and often employed. Naturalness may suffer somewhat as a consequence. On the other hand this playwright was less inclined than Tamayo to employ devices to force the plot. The result is a balance in the total credibility of the thesis dramas by these two authors.

There are critics who feel that there are too many characters in this drama. Yet the number of so-called friends who are willing and even eager to make financial gain at the expense of others serves to strengthen the author's point. This is a dramatic depiction of the greed which dominated so many people of the times and a harsh attack on those who pursued their nefarious ends under the guise of _negocios_.

There is no true character development in _El tanto por ciento_. The only change is in attitude when the protagonists are disillusioned by the perfidy of friends. Within the play people are presented either as good or evil, with the Condesa and Pablo the only ones falling in the former category. We do not see the characters exposed to a variety of situations; they are exposed only to those circumstances which in some way

affect them financially.

The Condesa, rich, beautiful, virtuous, and generous to her friends, is the idealized romantic young heroine of the play. She is deeply in love with Pablo and the fact that his fortune fluctuates in no way affects the intensity of her love. It is only when she doubts Pablo's character that she wavers. She is actually relieved to find that Pablo's poverty is all that stands between them, once she realizes that the tales which cast doubt on his character are false. There is a small note of irony and an element of revenge in the final scene. Adopting a businesslike attitude, she decides to charge rent for the quarters which her false friends, Petra and Gaspar, had formerly enjoyed gratis. Having money and lacking greed, she treated that commodity in perspective. But observing its evil workings on her associates, she speaks out for the author in recommending a reappraisal of their moral and financial values.

> Vivirás en calma si llegas a comprender que ese afán de enriquecer el cuerpo a costa del alma es universal veneno de la conciencia del hombre, que nos tapa en el nombre de negocios ... y hay negocios, sí por Dios, muy justos; no los igualo todos ... a quien tiene caridad, jamás le estorba el dinero.[7]

Pablo's virtues parallel those of the Condesa. He is generous with his possessions, for he lent securities to a friend at the risk of financial ruin. He shows

---

[7]Adelardo López de Ayala, Obras completas (Madrid: A. P. Dubrull, 1881-1885), p.213.

himself to be spontaneous and warm-hearted when he agrees to purchase the quinta because the Condesa admires it. Honorable to a fault, he must keep his word even though impoverishment will follow. In other words Pablo typifies the ideal hero of the era. When he thought his dehesa was about to be forfeited, his concern was not so much over his own precarious financial situation as that of the tenant farmers occupying his land. His highly developed sense of honor prevented his marrying the Condesa as long as her character was in question, even though such an alliance would have been financially profitable at a time when his fortunes were low. On the other hand, honor impelled him to hear her name cleared, even though it meant seeing her happy with another.

Roberto is as villainous as Pablo and the Condesa are virtuous. He is the usurer par excellence. He is proud that he has greatly multiplied his small inheritance through clever and unscrupulous management of business deals. The hope of making money governs his every act, colors every relationship. The reasons and emotions that motivate him stem from abnormal greed. Roberto entices others to join in his conspiracies and manipulates them for his own pruposes. He shows none of the traditional honor among thieves as he employs trickery and deceit to confiscate their shares of the spoils for himself. Then lest his business prowess not be admired sufficiently, he shamelessly gloats before his victims over his contemptible

accomplishments. Anything under the guise of business dealings is justifiable to him. "Una cosa es la amistad, y el negocio es otra cosa."[8] And those who are squeamish in financial dealings are not up with the times. It is apparent that Roberto's comments and observations reflect the author's own jaundiced view of the current business world.

Andrés, Petra's cousin, had been a wealthy don Juan. Through either incapability or indifference he wasted away his patrimony on wine, women, and song. "Siempre el usurero pronto; y luego el tanto por ciento,"[9] he bemoans. He frequently employs the readily available services of the ubiquitous usurers and now finds himself so deeply in debt that imprisonment appears almost inevitable. Yet he seems not to be seeking a solution to his plight, only lamenting it. He is slow to pick up Roberto's hint that he compromise the Condesa, marry her, and pay his debts with her money. He finally decides to carry out the plan. After hiding in the Condesa's empty room he makes certain that he is seen leaving via the balcony. But Roberto intends to intervene and secure the Condesa's money for himself. He betrays him. He buys Andrés' IOU's and has him imprisoned, a punishment which the author tends to imply is a logical result of the misuse

---

[8]López de Ayala, p. 65.

[9]López de Ayala, p. 22.

of too-easy credit.

Spurred by the hope of wealth and envy of those who have it, Petra readily cooperates in Roberto's scheme. Her husband Gaspar is basically a man of principle. But he too participates because he is too weak to withstand the pressures she and Roberto exert. Earlier in the play Roberto offered them another get-rich-quick scheme. He suggested they buy canal stock which was certain to soar in value with the approval of the government subsidy. They were interested in investing and would have asked the Condesa for the necessary money. But later in the play, when the truth would hurt their hope of financial gain, they refuse to clear her name.

Until the appearance of this play the money grabbing disease had been confined to the nobility and the upper middle class. But here we find Sabino and Ramona, Golden Age graciosos in nineteenth century garb, emulating their masters and providing comic relief. As they discuss lending reales to peasants at usurious rates Sabino envisions himself as a capitalist ranking with Madrid bankers. "Y allí los capitalistas nos hacemos una guerra,"[10] he proudly states. Money is the bone of contention between Ramona and Sabino and the subject of continuing lovers' spats throughout the play. The inequality of their respective savings is a stumbling

---

[10]López de Ayala, p. 36.

block to their marriage plans. Sabino sounds more and more like Roberto who has become his financial idol. Though dramatically Sabino and Ramona fulfill the function of the traditional servant, their actions show that they are of the new school. They are lacking in blind loyalty. Rising above class limitations, they are entertaining aspirations which one time would have been considered wholly beyond their reach. We begin to see a developing democratic spirit in the breaking down of class distinction. The rising bourgeoisie believes itself the equal of nobility and the servant class aspires to the better things of life, even at the possible expense of employers.

This dramatic depiction of schemes to get rich quickly in which anyone is willing to do almost anything for money is a strong indictment of the business ethics practiced in these decades. This code, or lack of it, is so widespread as to seem almost universal throughout Spain. Therefore the theater-goers found these characters typical rather than exceptional in their unprincipled greed. As Blanco García observes,

> Los avaros de El tanto por ciento están distantísimos del figurón y la caricatura; son de esos avaros que se encuentran en todas partes y a todas hora, y que, sin personificar el vicio, siguen sus inspiraciones por conveniencia mal entendida, por debilidad, por moda o por contagio. ... el propósito es demostrar que hoy el interés ha venido a reemplazar con despotismo

irresponsable todas las grandes aspiraciones del alma humana.[11]

While this comedy is most frequently studied, and justly so, for its literary merits, the knowledge to be gleaned about the current business conditions in Spain should not be overlooked. From this play the reader gains insight into public works, private enterprises, irrigation, navigation, hydro-electric power, the stock market, government roles in business, taxation, inflation, land speculation, banking and bonds, tenant farming, and land-sale practices, with emphasis also on the usurious money lending of the times.

CONSUELO[12]

Fernando returns to Madrid and learns that in his absence his fiancée Consuelo has become engaged to Ricardo, a wealthy and somewhat unprincipled businessman. After Consuelo is married she admits to her mother Antonia that she wed only for money and position but that she has come to love her husband. She then learns that he is having an affair with another woman. To make him jealous she writes a letter requesting Fernando to visit her when she is

---

[11]Francisco Blanco García, La literatura española en el siglo XIX (Madrid: Sáenz de Jubera Hermanos, 1910), p. 189.

[12]Consuelo, first presented in 1878, is a three act play in verse.

alone. Though meant for her husband's eyes only, the note reaches Fernando. This former suitor, once a struggling youth, has risen in the business world and is an associate of Ricardo. Although he hesitated to do so before, Fernando now authorizes a business trip for Ricardo so that the latter can accompany his paramour to Paris. Fernando then accepts Consuelo's "invitation" only to be cruelly scorned and rejected. Ricardo ignores Consuelo's pleas and defects to Paris. The ailing Antonia dies. Consuelo is left alone to pay for her ambition, greed, and selfishness with solitude and unhappiness.

Consuelo, the best of Ayala's plays, is devoid of non-essentials. The minor threads of the plot are deftly interwoven and artificial plot devices are kept to a minimum. While the characters exhibit degrees of human frailty, not one of these people could be considered villainous. None is guilty of double-dealing or double-crossing; none commits an outright evil deed. They are all persons whose behavior society would call honorable and decent, with the possible exception of those guilty of extra-marital activities. All of these people have counterparts in 1878 Madrid society.

The protagonist, Consuelo, is one of the young girls of her time who seeks a financially profitable marriage. But beyond desiring the obvious things that money can buy, she is also attracted to the cultural advantages made possible by wealth for she has been

educated to appreciate music and art. Although the family has always lived on modest means, Consuelo's father had been ambitious and something of a social climber. This may account for her education with the daughters of bankers and grandees and for her elevated standards of taste. Her original calculated interest in Ricardo would seem to show Consuelo as a shallow woman. But after their marriage, even as, ironically, his interest in her wanes, she develops an enduring love for him, indicating a hitherto unseen depth of character. Despite her husband's philandering she remains a model of feminine fidelity and declines to create further gossip by behaving in an unseemly way.

Fernando is the most controversial figure from the critics' point of view. He enters upon the scene as an ambitious young career man of honesty and integrity who is embarking upon his first important job. However his actions as the play develops give rise to speculation as to his ultimate goodness.

At the outset he is a bit too good, declining to make any money from sources he considers questionable. For this reason he earlier had refused to take advantage of a shady stock deal offered by his friend Fulgencio. Ironically, it was the same tip which made Ricardo wealthy. Fernando endured financial hardships in his early years and he fears poverty more than death. Driving ambition eventually leads him to compromise his principles. He

becomes a business partner of Ricardo and Fulgencio, his earlier integrity now corroded by his cynical acceptance of the standards of his associates.

Fernando's deep love for Consuelo has been repressed but not extinguished and he is aware of Ricardo's philandering. Therefore, when he receives Consuelo's invitation to visit her alone he further compromises his principles and accepts. He then realizes that she has heartlessly used him in a desperate effort to make her husband jealous and to "recapture" him. Fernando, now overwhelmed with bitter disillusionment, displays callousness toward Antonia who had mothered him, and refuses to leave when Consuelo orders him to do so. Fernando, now completely disillusioned, shows himself to be a very different sort of person than he appeared to be in act one.

In Fulgencio we meet an interesting individual. Desirous of filling his coffers, he is not above participating in shady deals, although one doubts his willingness to intiate them himself. He boasts of his lucky star and in spite of personal greed he is more than willing to share advantageous inside tips with his friends. However, he never allows avarice to dominate his life to the extent of creating an open scandal, though he is deterred less by rectitude than fear of social stigma. While seemingly he does not totally disapprove of Ricardo's love affair with Abela, he warns that she can bring ruin

to both his name and his fortune. Expediency rather than high morality dictates his behavior. One feels he is a man who gladly would be virtuous if virtue did not place upon him so many limitations.

Ricardo is one of those who profitted from Fulgencio's tip on the mining stock deal and made considerable money thereby. Later he serves on the board of directors of a growing, prospering company. He represents the modern capitalist. As a suitor he courts Consuelo at the home of Fulgencio without her mother's knowledge. With money as no object he can and does fulfill her every whim, thereby easily winning her hand. After gratifying his wish he readily turns his attentions elsewhere, not so much because of intense passion but because of vanity and egotism. When Fulgencio warns him that Abela can ruin him, Ricardo says he spends only his interest, not capital, and that he has his property and heart insured against fires. Ricardo exhibits neither nobility nor extreme villainy, remaining a static figure with no character change.

Antonia appears to be consistently good. She is a religious and philosophical woman who loves the child of her best friend as she does her own. In the first scenes she reminds Fernando that he has knowledge, aptitude, work, and, most important of all, is in the hands of God. Therefore he should not be unduly concerned about his future. Contented with her station in life, Antonia knows

how to gain genuine enjoyment from things without having to possess them, as evinced in the pleasure she derives from trips to the Prado and the Retiro. She wants Consuelo to marry a man of good character for love. Nevertheless she reluctantly consents to the alliance between Ricardo and Consuelo, much against her better judgment. Even after Ricardo's unkind treatment of her she urges Consuelo to keep her marriage vows and not create a scandal over Ricardo's affair. Antonia's eagerness to secure a good education for both Consuelo and Fernando indicates her true love of knowledge for its own sake. Her dead husband, who had entertained ambition to rise above his station, probably would have sought the children's schooling as a means to business and social betterment.

This play depicts the middle class on the rise socially, culturally, and financially. Fernando, poor as a youth, through education, work, and enterprise rises to high ranking, profitable positions in international trade and industry. Consuelo's late father was a political opportunist of the preceding generation. He unsuccessfully aspired to be numbered among the many who achieved class distinction, position, and finally financial gain through successful governmental coups. His daughter pursues his philosophy in selecting a successful and rising capitalist as her marriage partner; she however later exhibits some of the good characteristics epitomized by her mother. Fulgencio typifies the materialistic middle class. This

ever alert opportunist increases his fortune in the stock market, business ventures, and international trade.

This excellent attack on social vices again demonstrates that marriage contracted for the wrong reasons and business success sought largely for monetary rewards may carry the seeds of ultimate unhappiness and disillusion. As the author propounds this thesis the audience may well question why Fulgencio and Ricardo are not punished and why Antonia suffers an unfortunate end, for playgoers had come to expect good and evil to be awarded their appropriate desserts. To satisfy the theater-goer and mete out poetic justice, Consuelo is finally left alone through the departure of the man she loves, the bitter denunciation of her by Fernando, and the death of her mother, just as earlier she had walked out on Antonia and the man who loved her. But in the other instances a new note of realism is introduced, for perfect justice does not exist and Ayala wishes to present life as it is, not as it should be.

This play has been treated immediately following Ayala's other thesis drama dealing with the money question rather than in its chronological sequence. Not only did Ayala's Consuelo appear much later than his El tanto por ciento, it also postdates the first three of Gaspar's dramas based upon materialism by four years. This chronology may explain why the author treated Consuelo in a more mature and realistic manner than he did El tanto por ciento. It may also account for a dramatic approach

somewhat closer to Gaspar's.

CHAPTER V

ENRIQUE GASPAR

Enrique Gaspar (1842-1902), one of the best and most significant social thesis dramatists of the last half of the nineteenth century, is often overlooked by literary critics of today. In part this may be due to the fact that he was received by his contemporary reviewers with open hostility.

He was a great admirer and follower of Tamayo and Ayala, referring to the former as "maestro mío," but in his thesis drama he surpassed his predecessors. As was natural for the initiators of this social criticism, Tamayo and Ayala were somewhat timid and unrealistic in their approach. They showed the existence of contemporary depravity but neglected to analyse it. They offered life-like dilemmas but only commonplace solutions. While Gaspar fully recognized and commended the contributions of these men, he felt the need for a deeper, more perceptive study of society.

> Y dicho se está que esta comedia es cosa muy distinta a la de López de Ayala y sus continuadores. Si aquélla podía llamarse <u>comedia de sociedad</u>, porque se desenvolvía entre las clases elevadas, ésta es propiamente <u>comedia social</u>, porque con personajes de la misma clase o de otra, plantea cuestiones sociales, cosa que aquélla no hacía como no fuera con carácter
>
> --

íntimo o familiar.[1]

Gaspar was tired of the cardboard figures, the exalted verse, and blatant moralizing which were so prevalent, and the weak and superficially realistic plots which terminated in the expounding of some basic moral doctrine. He believed that the purpose of drama was to present vital contemporary problems and their sociological implications in a vivid and accurate manner. Men should be shown as they are rather than as they ought to be. There should be a penetrating psychological study of characters who truly develop within the confines of their environment and dramatic situation. And ultimately, there must be a logical and natural denouement which does not misrepresent reality. The author should truthfully represent life, never twisting events for the purpose of denouncing evil or praising virtue. In real life there are crimes that go undetected and criminals who remain free. Therefore in the drama evil may remain unpunished if this is the natural outcome. The sinner does not have to cry out "I repent!" nor does a justifiable penalty need to be imposed. The audience's recognition of evil and its inevitable consequences is sufficient, and without being didactic

---

[1]Narciso Alonso Cortés, "El teatro español en el siglo XIX," Historia general de las literaturas hispánicas, ed. Guillermo Diaz-Plaja (Barcelona: n. n., 1957), p. 319.

or administering theatrical justice, morality will triumph.[2]

Theater-goers were very much aware that they had not seen a fantasy which "came out all right in the end," but a derisive slice of life. It is for this reason that the critics and some segments of his audience were hostile toward Gaspar. He was accused of being too gross and materialistic, of copying only the evil and repulsive, of creating art which was not art at all. In short, he was too naturalistic for their tastes. Yet in spite of their harsh denouncements the audiences returned, though often only out of curiosity.

Social thesis drama at its inception dealt mainly with those members of the upper middle class whose obsession with the acquisition of wealth came from the desire for the status and luxuries it could provide. But Gaspar's first thesis play, which appeared shortly after the crash of 1865, deals with another aspect of this materialistic problem which was directly related to the recent economic setback. Here Gaspar represented the ruined bourgeois who, through a ridiculous sense of vanity, clung tenaciously to a social position he could not afford to maintain, doing everything within his power to conceal his precarious financial situation. The playwright also depicted the lower stratum of this bourgeoisie, the

---

[2]Kirschenbaum, p. 337.

clerks, minor officials and the like, who were not only striving for social distinction but who were often struggling for mere existence. Gaspar was a great psychologist whose characters were vital, convincing, and unmistakably human. Unlike his predecessors he demonstrated his ability for true character development.

In spite of the cool reception Gaspar received, he continued, undaunted in his thankless struggle to win a place for social criticism in the Spanish theater. Needless to say, the accolades heaped upon Echegaray for his neo-romantic dramas, enraged, dismayed, and disappointed him.

The extreme lengths to which people will go to present a social façade, maintain an economic status which they cannot afford or employ business and political maneuvering for personal aggrandizement are the weaknesses effectively attacked by Enrique Gaspar in the four plays here considered: Las circunstancias (1867), La levita (1868), El estómago (1874), and Las personas decentes (1890).

LAS CIRCUNSTANCIAS[3]

The ambitious Elvira urges her husband Miguel to

---

[3]Las circunstancias is a three act drama in prose. It was first presented in November, 1867, at the Teatro del Príncipe in Madrid.

compromise his principles and seek financial advancement. Her statement that there are always extenuating circumstances that can make a man forget duty and virtue is proven correct. A large sum of money falls into their hands. Due to circumstances they decide to keep this fortune for themselves. To ease his conscience Miguel offers a home to the rightful heir María. Earlier Miguel refused a bribe from Luis to alter court records but due to further circumstances and increasing greed he now decides to accept. María reveals that Luis is the father of her unborn child and Miguel persuades the seducer to marry her. As the play closes Miguel repents his own wrongdoing for he is about to be arrested. This is not for the crimes he actually committed but for counterfeiting. The money he stole was illegal currency. In essence the play is Miguel's struggle with his conscience as he gradually changes from a man of integrity to an avaricious person who succumbs to circumstances and turns to crime.

It is important that when the author originally submitted the play to the censor, Narciso Serra, the denouement differed from the one presented above. He never intended that María should be saved from shame and abandonment. He presented Luis as the remorseful married seducer who also paid for his misdeed through pangs of conscience. The author felt so strongly about this that he deemed it necessary to append a note to this effect.

He states that the censor had suggested he change the ending so as to make the work suitable for presentation and that it was not a solution compatible with his initial conception of a realistic plot.[4]

Las circunstancias is a poignant depiction of the way in which changing environment can influence a once good but weak-willed individual and gradually lead him on the path of degradation. Both the public and the critics harshly attacked what they considered an unpatriotic, naturalistic view of social vice. Yet they could not wholly deny its existence. In the days of moderate reaction which preceded the Revolution of 1868 theatrical censorship was re-established. But even the code of conventional morality which it imposed did not lessen the viewers' shock at the characters whom Gaspar introduced. While the audience might readily identify with them, it could not feel sympathy or affection for either of the major figures.

Elvira typifies the ambitious, nagging wife. She is jealous of those family friends who have risen above them in rank and power. This causes her to goad her less-strong husband to moral compromise. Miguel's courtship of her was conducted on the finca of his wealthy father. It may be assumed that during this time she had every expectation that her future husband would be a prosperous

---

[4]Enrique Gaspar, Las circunstancias (2nd ed.; Madrid: Imprenta de José Rodriguez, 1867), p. 68.

lawyer. Now she finds herself trapped by love and circumstances with a struggling notary-records clerk who seemingly has no technique for getting ahead in the world. She seeks continually to point out what she considers to be the error of his ways and to suggest dubious means of improving their fortunes. Conscience and honor are for weaklings in her world where it is a crime to appear or really be poor. The audience is amused at her fixation for finer furniture. However it is realized that she desires it not for their own pleasure but as a means of impressing influential people and securing resultant favors from them. Though she and Miguel owe their fortunes to María, Elvira nevertheless resents the girl's presence in their home. Showing a total lack of conscience she would have gladly sent her away had not Miguel intervened. Elvira furnished momentum to their crime. But she shows a touch of cowardice when she says that she wants the decision to be wholly Miguel's. Otherwise this minor Lady Macbeth shows herself to be consistently vain, selfish, and grasping, without pity or conscience.

In Miguel we see a well-meaning but weak-willed man at the mercy of circumstances and a nagging wife. He was reared in opulence by his father who was a prominent and successful Madrid banker. Then Miguel saw his hopes of becoming a lawyer dashed to bits. His father was bankrupt and had to sell all his property and remaining possessions to satisfy his creditors. While it is not

specifically stated in the play, we can logically assume that Miguel's father was one of the many who suffered greatly from the economic crash of 1865, the memory of which obviously would still be fresh in the minds of the theater-goers.

Though married to the woman he loves, Miguel is reduced to accepting a lesser business role than he had anticipated in order to earn the family's daily bread. He deplores not so much the idea of work as the nature of it. His inherited sense of honor and virtue becomes a constant target for his wife's barbed verbal attacks. He asks her if she wants comforts and social position at the cost of virtue, to which she replies, "¡La virtud!, la virtud es una cosa convencional de que el hombre se sirve según las circunstancias."[5] She begins to convince him. Gradually he gives way to expediency as circumstances place in his hand the opportunity for bettering his finances and quieting his wife. Act by act he yields to temptation. Then he admits to himself that he no longer fears doing evil so much as he fears the consequences of being caught. Finally he is infected by the fever of avarice. He urgently seeks to accept the bribe he has twice before rejected in order to increase as quickly as he can whatever resources still remain. There is irony in the final climax when Miguel is accused of a crime he did

---

[5]Gaspar, p. 9.

not commit. He is punished for counterfeiting, not for stealing or for betraying the trust of public office, the crimes for which he so long feared indictment.

Miguel and Elvira are not villains as much as they are petty thieves. They are presented with an easy way to insure financial security. Since there is relatively little risk of being caught they cannot pass up the golden opportunity. Though at the outset there is a clash of ideals and wills, gradually husband and wife become as one in their common desire to make the most of every fortuitous circumstance. There is no need for a raisonneur in this play. Through the conversations and struggles of these two characters we know their intentions, motives, attitudes, and actions. We also can rather accurately foresee the ultimate and logical consequences of their conduct.

Antonio, María's father, typifies the middle class man who desires to conceal his state of near poverty. He even foregoes meals in order to have more money to spend ostentatiously. Yet his meager income is still insufficient for him to maintain the coveted social position dictated by his previous rank and education. Therefore he seeks to increase his capital at the gambling casino. Prior to his sudden death he gives a packet containing money to Miguel for safe keeping. Although one cannot be certain how Antonio came by this money, we realize from his conversation that he knows it is

counterfeit. Later he is accused of having contributed to his daughter's downfall. Perhaps this is a just accusation since it appears that he neglected her in order to pursue his quest for money. Had the author's original plot line been acceptable the disgrace brought to María and the family name would have been an additional indictment against the securing of money for the purpose of maintaining false social standards.

María remains a relatively minor figure although the action of the play revolves around her. This eighteen-year-old motherless girl is left by her father to her own devices, betrayed by a seducer, and defrauded of funds (even though counterfeit) by so-called friends. When her father died his papers yielded only debts. She asks Miguel and Elvira if they can find her a job by the day in some establishment or piece work to do at home. She is willing to work and would do so rather than accept charity. However she finally accepts Miguel's hospitality.

Luis, though an experienced seducer himself, spared no expense or effort in his attempt to protect his sister's indiscretion from public exposure. Only belatedly does he make restitution for one of his own lustful affairs by "making an honest woman" of María and giving a name to their unborn child. There is little indication of his attitude toward Miguel's ethical refusal to accept his bribe and to surrender the incriminating letter. However when Miguel eventually offers to become a

partner to this altering of public records, the contemptuous scorn with which Luis then regards him is obvious. Luis seemingly condones minor deceit if he is the one to initiate it. But he considers others who become a party thereto to possess no honor of word, no shame, and no virtue. He maintains a double standard, one for his own family, another for society.

Tamarite and Martínez, though never seen in the play, are held up by Elvira to Miguel as models worthy of emulation. Though they were once poor they have now achieved positions of financial power by unscrupulous maneuvers and dubious means. The author underscores the despicable behavior of such middle class opportunists on the rise. When Miguel turns to Martínez seeking favors he has Martínez insult and reject this old friend upon whose charity he had once depended.

In essence Gaspar's thesis is a plea for a higher private and public morality than that which he observed in Spain during his time. Though only twenty-five years old when he wrote this play, he was indeed a cynical crusader. His biting indictment of social sham struck the conscience of many playgoers who found some of his characters uncomfortably similar to themselves.

LA LEVITA[6]

Cesáreo, once prominent and wealthy, now supports his wife Emilia and daughter Isabel on a meager salary. Yet he still wears his oft-mended levita, for this symbol of position helps conceal his true plight. A rich friend from former days, Manuel, offers him a promising business deal but he does not have the money to invest. He asks the wealthy Valeriano for a loan but is refused. To keep up with Manuel and to maintain his façade Cesáreo gambles and spends money lavishly. He invites Manuel to dinner and plans to buy food with a salary advance. He then learns he has been fired so he pawns his cherished levita. After sudden parental urging Isabel accepts Valeriano's proposal, though at first she does not love him. Manuel comes for dinner and Valeriano gives him money for Cesáreo's investment. Valeriano then recognizes Manuel's signature on the receipt and accuses him of having perpetrated a nation-wide fraud of which he was a victim. In a scuffle Manuel's levita is torn, revealing it to be the mended one Cesáreo pawned. The exposure of Manuel shows Cesáreo the error of his own ways. He renounces his false standards and accepts Valeriano's construction job offer which he refused before because he thought such work beneath him.

---

[6]La levita, a prose drama in three acts, was first presented at the Teatro del Príncipe on February 29, 1868.

With La levita we again see Gaspar presenting a scathing criticism of the false standards established by society. He shows the lengths to which certain segments of the once affluent upper middle class will go to conceal their most precarious financial situations. The picture presented is both pathetic and ludicrous. We witness the foolish vanity which impels men to spend even the little they have on ostentation, here symbolized by the frock coat. This garment was once an emblem of education and respectability but now is the mask of the hungry Spaniard. Wearing the levita not only gives him an unjustifiable sense of security, power, and status, but also helps him conceal from the world his impoverished condition.

The new bourgeoisie attained an unprecedented position of financial security resulting from the economic boom of the '50s and '60s. It then established new social codes from which it was considered shameful to deviate. Members of this class who suffered the effects of market and business crashes of 1865 were numerous. Some were made jobless by the shifting of political regimes. Others were victims of both disasters. Therefore Cesáreo and Manuel who found themselves struggling for life's bare necessities are not isolated cases. Rather they are typical of those Spaniards who strove against tremendous odds to maintain their former social standards under their new and changing economic conditions.

There is a symbolic thread running throughout the

play. Valeriano observes that there is a three part bolero of life which is often played out by personas decentes behind the façade of the levita. First they have no money to buy olive oil so they charge it. This is deceit. Secondly, they pawn clothing or jewelry to buy theater tickets so that they can make a social appearance. This is hypocrisy and vanity. Finally, when they have nothing more to pawn or sell they begin to live on public welfare and fall so low as to comerciar los hijos. This is fraud.

At the end of Act One Emilia is forced to do just what he outlined in the first part of the piece. Then Isabel enters to ask if they heard her play the first part of the bolero her father just gave her. Manuel replies yes, and on to the second part which is more difficult. When she asks if he knows it he replies that he plays all of that bolero. In Act Two Valeriano gives Cesáreo money for an indigent family. Cesáreo uses this cash for theater tickets, promising Emilia to replace it later. Then he realizes he will have to pawn his levita to pay for tomorrow's dinner. As the curtain closes strolling musicians are heard outside. They are playing the second part of the bolero. Cesáreo and Emilia decide to encourage Isabel to marry Valeriano though they have convinced themselves that they are concerned only with her future security. In the final scene Cesáreo repents his wrong-doing and Valeriano remarks to him, "¡Qué cerca ha estado

usted de que le tocaran la tercera parte del bolero!"[7]

Cesáreo is the proud ex-governmental secretary whose political and financial fortunes have steadily dwindled in the past eleven years. At the time of a successful counter-revolutionary movement in 1854 they were living in Santander and he began serving in his governmental post. The family lived in elegant luxury and competed socially with that of don Manuel, administrator of the public treasury. After two years Cesáreo lost his position following a revolution which put the conservatives back in power. However his family still continued its mode of living in hopes that when political winds shifted he would be elevated to a governorship. Three years of dwindling fortune forced him to sell their house. Having depleted his resources further by founding an unsuccessful newspaper and having lost all hope of political favor, Cesáreo moved with his family to Madrid where they now live anonymously and quietly. His job as clerk pays him so little that he always finds it necessary to collect his wages in advance.

Cesáreo is fundamentally an honest man, devoted to his family and loyal to his political philosophy. Yet blind adherence to the code represented by his cherished levita leads him toward moral disintegration by the three stages expounded in the play by Valeriano. He hopes his

---

[7]Enrique Gaspar, La levita (Madrid: Alonso Gullón, 1878), p. 70.

false façade will conceal his poverty, yet he fails to pierce a similar masquerade of Manuel. With an amazing talent for self-deception he prefers to believe that the lies and promises of his new business associate represent the true picture. He almost reaches the point of selling his daughter in marriage, but recoils in horror when he learns the extent and depth of Manuel's deceit. He sees in him the man he himself might become unless he alters his course. With dramatic and somewhat unrealistic suddenness he reforms. He confesses his hypocrisy and weakness and repudiates his false standards saying: "Amasaré yeso con levita, seré un triste jornalero, pero las gentes sensatas aplaudirán mi conducta."[8]

Emilia resembles her husband in character. She is neither basically dishonest nor avaricious. Although she spent money freely for clothes, jewels, and other finery in their days of opulence, the expenditures were both within their means and compatible with her husband's position in government and society. Now that she is reduced to poverty she accepts it without excessive complaining. In fact she is grateful for the good fortune which has provided them with their meager but steady income. Emilia initially says she will never suggest that Isabel marry for speculation. Yet seeing her family with no money and no prospects of any, she finds herself

---

[8]Gaspar, La levita, p. 70.

urging, although not forcing, Isabel's alliance with the man who will prove their salvation. She knows that she and Cesáreo are wrong in continuing their masquerade and repeatedly asks why they do not openly admit their poverty. Nevertheless she is so deeply concerned about their future that she remains a somewhat willing accomplice. There is no indication of her reaction to Cesáreo's final change of character and his acceptance of more honorable and realistic standards. However the audience surely must have heard her sigh of relief.

Manuel is a character who offers Cesáreo a glimpse of the man whom he will resemble if he continues through the bolero of life. This former friend has already played the three parts of this piece. He has overstepped legal bounds and is rapidly nearing imprisonment or execution. With the loss of his high governmental position he lowered himself to most fraudulent practices in his attempts to make easy money. He has become a thief, liar, and master of cunning deceit. He epitomizes the fallen wearer of the levita in his lowest form.

Isabel represents the feminine love interest in the play. The dutiful, affectionate, eighteen-year-old daughter would marry to alleviate her parents' difficulties even had she not seen the true virtues of her suitor and fallen in love with his kindness and magnaminity. She has accepted their reduced circumstances without complaint. We learn she has cheerfully worn the same black silk dress

on special occasions for the past three years. Her affection for her father is exhibited when she spends seven reales for a handkerchief to embroider for his saint's day present. This money is her hoarded allowance which she has been saving to buy sheet music, a luxury she has not been afforded for some time. Isabel's characterization is rather weak and unrealistic. She is almost too sweet and self-effacing to be true. Dramatically, her chief function in the play is to enable the audience to see the good qualities of the unsophisticated, honorable Valeriano.

Valeriano is the self-made man of this new generation. Through ambition, enterprise, and hard work, he has risen from poverty to become the owner of a soundly established business. He is aware of his lack of education and social graces, but now that his business is established and his future secure he turns some of his attention to the niceties of life. While he wishes to learn from Isabel the rudimentary etiquette regarding proper behavior he is not willing to emulate further those who wear the levita. Though he himself owns a frock coat, he feels more comfortable in worker's apparel. To him this Prince Albert type of coat symbolizes all the false pride, foolish egotism, deceitful behavior and moral disintegration he observes in those persons around him who wear them.

Que el hombre malo por instinto sea malo no me asombra;

> pero que personas honradas, sólo por llenar las exigencias de la levita vayan sin querer caminando al vicio y cometan iniquidades mayores que las de los malvados por inclinación, eso es horrible.[9]

Some critics find his speech unrefined, reflecting an untutored mind. They exhibit surprise at the depth of the philosophical perception with which the author endows him. Although he may not have had formal schooling, it must not be overlooked that his business acumen has brought him success. His experience in the realm of commerce has undoubtedly given him an agility of mind and insight into human nature. These are the very traits his so-called superiors often fail to demonstrate. Considering the times in which he is living, to be successful with honor in business presupposes an alert, competent, and discerning person. He continuously questions Manuel's veracity and intentions when all others not only believe in Manuel but defend him against Valeriano's accusations.

He is generous with his money, considerate and loving in his associations with Isabel, and forgiving of her parents' deceitful treatment of him. Valeriano shows himself to possess in full measure those gentler qualities which all too often are reserved in drama for the gentleman of higher class. However they are not incompatible with the character of a working man.

As a dramatic character Valeriano is a most unusual creation of the author. It is unlike Gaspar to

---

[9]Gaspar, La levita, p. 22.

present such a virtuous, sympathetic person in his plays. Also for the first time in the dramas that have been treated in this study we find a hard working businessman who does not shun physical labor being held up to the audience for praise and emulation. He differs from other characters we have already seen. They appear either unable or unwilling to make concrete plans for their future. But Valeriano is already building a house so that he will have a home in which to live in old age. Cesáreo once owned three houses but now rents modest furnished quarters. Ironically, he is ultimately reduced to helping one he had once belittled to construct his home.

There is a freshness in this new slant on society. Gaspar's portrayal of the proletarian-become-bourgeois adds to his realistic depiction of life. In his further desire to present truth with accuracy he leaves Manuel unpunished and unrepentant, but with Cesáreo's warning that continued deceits and criminal acts will bring retribution from other victims.

Although Cesáreo's change of heart was abrupt, because of dramatic exigency, it was not wholly out of character. When increasing pressures made it impossible to maintain his sham, his basic strength of character emerged.

Need it be emphasized further that Gaspar's solution to the financial problems of the wearer of the levita is an honest appraisal of his predicament and a

sincere dedication to labor and work?

EL ESTÓMAGO[10]

Antonio, a multi-millionaire, refuses to compromise principles and accept an ambassadorship offered by the opposition party. He reluctantly agrees to hold a fortune in gambling winning for his nephew Pancho. Antonio promises his daughter Laura to the poor painter Ricardo whom she loves. Then he learns he is financially ruined. Encouraged by his wife Mercedes, Antonio gradually compromises his principles for material gain. He avoids returning Pancho's money. He alternately encourages the poor Ricardo and the rich Pancho as suitors for Laura, depending upon his current prospects of financial salvation. Antonio finally decides to accept the ambassadorial post only to have it taken from him by the friend who had tried to persuade him to accept it. Antonio learns he was to have inherited the fortune of his late uncle, don Álvaro, but that the money had been stolen before his uncle died. Antonio is forced to return Pancho's money just after he learns that this is his inheritance which Pancho won from the thief who robbed don Álvaro. Laura decides to save her family and agrees to wed Pancho, but he gallantly withdraws in favor of Ricardo,

---

[10] *El estómago* is a three act play in prose. It was first presented in the Teatro del Circo on October 6, 1874.

to whom he gives his money for the support of Laura and her family. Antonio repents and vows to work in order to live conscience free.

As befits the title of the play, the entire action of El estómago takes place in the dining room and within the time lapse of one day. The exciting sequence of events and rapid action of the play undoubtedly pleased the audience. Nevertheless all these melodramatic maneuverings strained the credulity of the theater-goers. Too many coincidences abound in the plot: a fire, chance meetings, letters, newspaper articles, unexpected arrivals, and a convenient death.

The theme of Gaspar's play, as suggested by the title, is expounded by Pancho, his portavoz. While the stomach physiologically defined is the principal organ of digestion, psychologically considered it is the motivating force of human actions. This is exemplified by numerous idiomatic phrases employing the word estómago. Also the stomach has a direct relation to medical diagnoses and cures, and to reactions to bad news, unpleasant sights, shocks, and baths. Pancho says in essence that it is not unusual for a well-fed man to be virtuous. However a hungry man may find it necessary to compromise his principles in order to satisfy the demands of his stomach. His reiterated theme is that all evil springs from a desire to eat. "La historia de la humanidad se sintetiza en Esáu vendiendo a Jacob su primogenitura por un plato

de lentejas."[11]

Gaspar seemingly found the symbolism of the bolero in La levita to be both successful and popular. He conceived another similar idea for this play. While it is interesting, unfortunately it is overworked. Gaspar employs an elaborate explanation of musical notes and their placement upon the staff to delineate his stratification of the various classes in contemporary Spanish society.

The lowest of the musical staff, on the bottom line, are the seasonal laborers. Their uncertainty of employment and miserable subsistence make their lot the most wretched of all. Following, in the first space above, come those with steady employment. They have no time to look enviously upon the levels above but they take satisfaction that they are better off than the lowest group. On the next line is placed the first group that exhibits worldly ambition. This class aspires to supplant the laborer's cap of which it is ashamed with the crowned hat of respectability. Next in the ascending scale come the petty merchants and humble shopkeepers. Occupying the middle of the staff, in the exact center of the social and economic world, is the middle class. It is perched equidistant between splendor and misery. In public it displays the former but in private it approaches the

---

[11]Enrique Gaspar, El estómago (2nd ed.; Madrid: Imprenta de José Rodriguez, 1874), p. 23.

latter. This group includes clerks and lesser government officials who walk the line between job advancement and unemployment. The space above is occupied by the proprietors, the landlords. They support themselves on the inferior classes and serve as the regulators of the tone. Just below is a flatted note. This group is made up of those who through misfortune have fallen slightly in the scale. Having been deprived of their comfortable position they cling precariously to a demoted style of living. Then comes the class which is represented by powerful financiers, industrialists, and high government officials. Though they live in elegant luxury, they still are subject to fluctuations in fortune. The last space on the staff is tenanted by the aristocracy of talent and of ancestry. On the top line, highest in position, stands the priesthood. This group is rooted in the material world but it is looking upward into the eternal and infinite space above it.

The teeter-tottering of Antonio's fortunes carries him to the heights and the depths in a few short hours. First he is immensely wealthy, then he has lost all; he is given a lucrative post, only to be denied it; funds momentarily expected never arrive; he has Pancho's money yet does not have the use of it; he is rich again through an inheritance only to find that snatched away by a thief--all this, before he settles down to a prospective level of modest living.

Antonio finds his wife's ambitious desires for higher social position and further wealth disgusting and indicative of character weakness. To denounce his political convictions and thereby abdicate his principles is unthinkable. Pancho asks his uncle to hold his gambling winnings for him. Antonio reluctantly agrees only when Mercedes urges him to help this relative whose reform depends upon this money. Pressing Ricardo to reveal the cause of his current poverty, Antonio learns that his uncle don Álvaro had cheated the youth out of his patrimony by absconding with funds Ricardo's father placed in his trust.

Antonio learns that insurrectionists in Cuba have burned all his sugar holdings. He is completely ruined. He suddenly finds it expedient to change political affiliation, to waver in family loyalty toward both Laura and Pancho, and to deceive his political benefactor. However at this time he still retains a measure of honor and scruples. He refrains from appropriating a portion of Pancho's money to pay his waiting creditors. The inheritance which Antonio supposes to be forthcoming brings him new hope of financial security. Commensurate with this expected wealth is an increase in honorable behavior. When his hopes again plummet Antonio's intentions waver. But Pancho accuses him of being ruined whereupon Antonio returns the money to him. It is this external pressure, however, rather than inner moral

motivation that prompts him to do so.

Antonio serves as the perfect example of Pancho's contention that the exigencies of the stomach govern men's morality and actions. Within this play we see the perfect prototype of the bourgeois man who has risen from a modest position to the heights of financial success through his own efforts only to fall to his original financial mediocrity. He then employs questionable means to conceal his plight and to regain in measure his former position. However in the final scenes we find Antonio behaving more in keeping with our original concept of him. He finally repents, glorying in humble work as the source of true honor, worth, and happiness. He reflects upon his days of greatest happiness when he worked hard to support his bride. He tells Mercedes that he will work again. When she exhibits surprise he amplifies: "Tú no sabes lo que vale poder exclamar: 'conservo mi honra.' ¡Ay! ¡Cómo se ensancha el corazón! ¡Con qué libertad se respira!"[12]

Mercedes rejected a wealthy Marqués and married the man she loved even though he was only a merchant clerk of modest means. Over the years they have risen both in affluence and influence in society. Having enjoyed such luxury, she has become infected with the current ill of her times and is avid for additional wealth and power.

---

[12]Gaspar, El estómago, p. 78.

Because political position carries more prestige than mere money, she urges Antonio to accept the London post. She points out that the wife of a diplomat of their acquaintance was frequently complimented for jewelry she wore when her own matched set of gems, duplicates, went unremarked. She cites this circumstance to indicate the relative position of their social rank. Even though she wants to see her daughter happy, she rationalizes that a loveless marriage with money is preferable to love and poverty. Therefore she changes her attitudes toward Ricardo and Pancho accordingly.

Mercedes' influence over her husband is considerable. We see her urging him to follow the course of expediency rather than that of integrity and honor whenever self-interest so dictates. It may be noted that when she and her husband believe they have inherited don Álvaro's fortune it is she who turns down Ricardo's request for the money which is rightfully his. She is the one who weaves the fabric of lies for Pancho in order to conceal her husband's financial ruin. It also is she who initially scorns don Álvaro and his lack of scruples. Yet when she learns that they are to inherit his money she laments the passing of this relative of whom they were so fond.

In spite of the dubious motives and unethical behavior of Antonio and Mercedes, they evince a note of appreciation for talent and intellect. This has not been

stressed hitherto in other plays of this study. Two distinct points are made: it is admirable and meritorious for wealth to aid talent, even though it may mean crossing class lines; intellect and ability represent a kind of enduring capital which, properly spent, can lead to success in any field.

Laura is the typical well-bred daughter of her day. Though lavishly indulged in the material things, she is neither avaricious nor selfish. Instead, she exhibits a commendable compassion for the elderly poor. She has been saving her clothing and jewelry allowance with the intention of eventually opening an asylum for the aged. She would rather ease their pressing plight than indulge in superfluous finery for herself. Ironically, she uses her savings to pay her father's creditors and alleviate the financial suffering of her own parents. It is from purely unselfish motives that she finally offers to give up the man she loves. She decides it is her filial duty to help her family by contracting a financially profitable marriage. We have seen self-sacrificing daughters before, but Laura differs from the others. She wishes to work for and with the man she loves. She is even willing that their future children work to insure the necessities and joys of life, not only now but in years to come.

Ricardo is the ideal young man. Stripped of his inheritance by an unscrupulous capitalist, he has turned

to his artistic ability in an effort to earn a living by respectable means. Since the economic hardships of the times make his business less than lucrative he endeavors to invest elsewhere. But this action is not motivated by a desire for wealth and luxury. Ricardo only wishes to attain sufficient financial independence to avoid reliance upon his future wife's dowry. He is rebuffed and denied by Mercedes and is manipulated as a marionette by both of Laura's desperate parents. Yet Ricardo displays his inherent generosity and nobility of heart. He not only forgives them their actions but offers to share his meager income with them. This man who once anticipated a financially secure future has suffered his loss graciously. He now contents himself with his work and the social and economic position it offers. Through Ricardo the author again points out the merit and honor of dedication to work.

In Pancho we find the profligate rogue with an avowed desire to repent. The once rash, yet generous and warm-hearted youth spent his fortune in earlier years. It appears that he has lived something of a picaresque life. Once again he is the possessor of a sizeable amount of money, so he now decides to change his ways and to adopt the attitudes of his avaricious contemporaries. He denies his relatives the use of any of his money because such a loan would not be a sound investment. Pancho loves Laura yet he hesitates to ask her to share his fate. Perhaps this is because, as he informs the audience at the end of

the play, he has cancer of the stomach. However this is a condition which can be construed as physical or otherwise in view of his philosophy and theories of that organ of the body.

In the final scene we again see the generous and somewhat rash Pancho to whom we were introduced earlier. He gives Ricardo all of his money and tells him to paint for him as much as it will buy. When asked how he will now live Pancho replies, by doing the only thing he has never done--selling paintings. Pancho is the voice of Gaspar when he categorizes the social classes of Spain and expounds his thesis regarding the evils initiated by hunger.

Don Álvaro is introduced as a despised, avaricious, old miser. He is scorned and ostracized by his relatives for the unscrupulous methods whereby he obtained his wealth. When the circumstances of his death are made public in a newspaper, he is referred to as a known capitalist. He is a contemptible stock character made somewhat ridiculous by references to his burying his money in the cellar floor. Though never seen, he is important to the development of the plot.

Hilario is the master politician. Though he says he disapproves of apostasy, he does not hesitate to urge Antonio to abandon his political opinions. He advises him to act according to modern precepts and accept a position with the opposition. When there is a political upheaval

he does not fail to maneuver that identical post for himself under the new regime. He cannot pass up such an opportunity for self-advancement.

In El estómago Gaspar goes beneath the levita to find a more primitive motive for social behavior, hunger. Even more basic than the desire to maintain some semblance of former living standards is the imperative need for food. While clinging to outward signs of gentility may necessitate the employment of questionable methods, satisfying of the stomach may cause even the most honorable to abandon principles. Gaspar selects for this play but one of the many situations he might have observed in contemporary society. He repeats a favorite theme as he points out the answer to the hungry man's problems. The solution is to be found in gainful work, diligently sought and faithfully performed.

LAS PERSONAS DECENTES[13]

Ramón has come to Madrid to learn the ways of personas decentes. He is horrified and baffled by the code by which these supposedly honorable people live as he witnesses their involved political and personal maneuvers. Ramón's cousin Antonio is trying to restore his lost fortune through speculation with railroad stock.

---

[13]Las personas decentes, a three act drama in prose, was first presented in 1890.

He promises Ramón's father a governorship for Ramón in exchange for his support of the railroad. Antonio's sister Carmen has him alter the route to pass by her now worthless lands. She encourages Bermúdez romantically so that he will use his influence in the Cortes to obtain governmental approval of the project. Manuel who wishes to marry her for her money also uses his influence and wins her hand. Bermúdez then learns that Carmen has used him and he sways the Cortes against Antonio's project. Under threat of public exposure as the man who robbed Antonio years earlier, he pays Antonio's debts and again sways the Cortes, now in the latter's favor. Ramón still acts honorably. He promises to wed Leonor whom he had unwittingly compromised, refuses the governorship, and insists upon exposing Bermúdez. However he finally weakens, rejects Leonor, and drops the charge against Bermúdez to win Bermúdez' daughter whom he loves.

When Las personas decentes was presented Gaspar was accepted as a dramatist for the first time. In fact he was highly praised for this work. During nearly a quarter of a century he had endeavored to inspire reform as he attacked middle class corruption and moral laxity which he observed in life around him. His plays had been harshly criticized and his pleas ignored. Now even those who had delivered the most scathing denunciations of his dramas hailed Gaspar as the master of realism. The compliments heaped upon him, though long overdue, were

particularly gratifying to Gaspar. While he was living in China he heard nothing but disturbing reports of the glowing dramatic successes of Echegaray. It irked him that this perpetrator of glaring falsity on the Spanish stage could receive acclaim when his own efforts to influence intelligent men were overlooked.[14]

In this play Gaspar hurls a blistering satirical attack upon all those white-gloved levita wearers who appease their stomachs or line their pockets by manipulating all circumstances for their own selfish ends, even as they proclaim themselves to be "decent persons." These personas decentes condemn the petty thief for stealing a few pesetas. Yet they not only accept but participate in scandalous frauds, graft, and political corruption. In the casino, stock exchange, congressional halls, and social salons members of this self-styled honorable class maneuver for personal gain. Gaspar himself said regarding this play:

> Pero como lo que yo me propongo es hacer la fotografía de un grupo que se llama las personas decentes, no me es posible falsear el modelo, si quiero que los espectadores encuentren el parecido y digan al caer el telón: --Esto va con algunos que yo conozco.[15]

Within this play we see an excellent depiction of the contemporary code by which the upper middle class conducts its business, political, and social affairs.

---

[14]Kirschenbaum, pp. 329-331.

[15]Enrique Gaspar, Las personas decentes (Madrid: Florencio Fiscowich, 1890), p. 8.

These personas decentes work largely just within the letter rather than the spirit of the law and they practice their art with professional skill in both public and private life.

In the political arena personal interests and corruption dictate their actions. Antonio is eager for governmental approval of his railroad. He has had his name placed on the ballot in opposition to the candidate supported by the ministry. He promises to withdraw his name upon favorable passage of the railroad legislation. In order to secure local consent for the line, Antonio's old friend Manuel galdly uses his influential political position. He secures a promise of a governorship for Ramón in return for reciprocal favors from the latter's ambitious father. Manuel also maneuvers to get from the cabinet a post as health spa director for his brother, a clear case of nepotism. Manuel is in precarious financial predicaments himself. He encourages passage of the railroad bill which will please Carmen. Thereby he insures her acceptance of him as her fiancé and the future use of her anticipated railroad wealth to pay his debts. Carmen uses feminine wiles to court Bermúdez' favor for the votes he controls. Bermúdez desires Antonio's candidacy and initially agrees to sway Congress if Antonio will cede his position to him. At an intermediate point Bermúdez seeks personal revenge. He breaks his word to Antonio and sponsors the railroad route

unfavorable to Carmen. Later, in order to save himself from distruction, he again alters his course. He retracts earlier statements to Congress and once more prevails upon this august body to adopt the plan which, unbeknownst to its members, best serves his personal interests.

In a lower echelon of the political ranks we note an assassination of a governor. This is a direct result of his dismissing an employee who would not conspire with him in condoning illegal activities. A second unexecuted political assassination is hinted when Leonor informs Ramón of a plot against his father's life. A political appointment with economic implications is awarded to a bank director over the head of one who logically deserves it.

In the realm of public finance, Antonio depends upon the successful passage of the railroad bill to bolster his failing credit. He knows that with company funds to support his request, anything he asks at a bank will be granted. He also endeavors to manipulate railroad stock prices to suit his personal need.

In the realm of private finance, Bermúdez regains the favor of Antonio by paying off the latter's debts. Carmen hopes to increase the value of her property and conspires with her brother to re-route the railroad. Manuel is accused of seeking a marriage of speculation. Vicuña, the poor baron who serves as titular head of Antonio's railroad company, admittedly seeks to combine

his title with the Bermúdez family wealth through marriage with Julia. Both Lafuente and Bermúdez were in desperate need of funds. At different times they stooped to cheating and outright thievery, respectively, from a sense of urgency.

Bermúdez is now wealthy. He dedicates a portion of his money to good works, apparently as partial atonement for his crime. He obtains a pardon for his servant Nicolás who was unjustly punished for Bermúdez' crime. Yet we never see him evince any distress over the shame, injustice, and hardships he has caused Nicolás and his family. Since Bermúdez has reached the financial heights, he covets political power for himself and a title for his daughter. He initially rejects the well-to-do Ramón in favor of the licentious nobleman, Vicuña, who has little but his rank to commend him.

Julia, Bermúdez' daughter, is relatively unaffected by money. Neither does she have need of more than she has nor does she desire to make an outward show of the luxuries it can buy. She almost laments their wealthy state. She recalls the joyous days of their poverty when insignificant gifts were given and received in true loving spirit. Today the finest of offerings brings only an indifferent response. Her generosity is displayed when through her efforts Nicolás receives the requisite money to go to America.

Norberto Lafuente is a fallen member of the class

of personas decentes. In the opening scenes there is a card game in which he is caught cheating in order to win. He reveals that since he lost his judgeship he has become impoverished. But since he is one of the personas decentes he is forgiven his crime. Bermúdez even offers him a temporary position at his bank. After this scene Lafuente drops out of sight until the end of the play. He reappears as the rehabilitated judge restored to his former rank. He is not like most of the characters in the play who change loyalties and alter actions at their convenience. Lafuente refuses to be the means of punishing Bermúdez. He renounces his office rather than turn against this man who was his benefactor in his time of need. Lafuente thus exhibits a new constancy and integrity infrequently observed.

There is a noticeable new feature of this play compared with previous dramas which have been studied. A number of people who face loss of riches openly admit their financial need. Although Antonio's history would indicate a desire to obtain money by whatever means available, he refuses Ramón's offer of a loan. He says that while he could live on the money for some months, the returning of it would only prolong his difficulties. This is also a new touch.

Ramón has come to Madrid to study and emulate the ways of personas decentes. But he demonstrates more honor, integrity, and constancy than do any of his models. This

unpolished, unsophisticated youth from the provinces clings to his beliefs of proper conduct with a kind of moral stubbornness. He continues to do so even after they all point out to him the correctness of yielding to convenience and necessity. Ramón's own beliefs that standards of justice and honor should be the same for all are tenets of the ideal code which men should follow. Yet even Ramón finds it necessary to bend to circumstances in order to fit into a society which expects and condones flexible behavior. He decides not to denounce Bermúdez so he can spare Julia the shame and win her hand. He ignores his former pledge to Leonor whose already questionable character he has unwittingly and innocently besmirched. Yet still baffled, he concludes that he does not know what it is to be a persona decente. At the close of the play he sends a telegram to his father. The message reads: "Regreso mañana; doy por concluída mi educación. No sé lo que es ser persona decente."[16]

The members of the brotherhood of personas decentes unfailingly abide by their unwritten creed: all attitudes and actions toward fellow members are to be governed in relation to the services that may be rendered. A good deed performed today may be reciprocated in kind tomorrow. Conversely no grudge should be held as a result of an unfriendly act because tomorrow the tables may be turned.

---

[16]Gaspar, Las personas decentes, p. 187.

Yet if a member seems to have lost his potential usefulness he is then, if only temporarily, excommunicated.

Once again Gaspar with satirical and revealing clarity mirrors a segment of society. Through this play he repeats his plea for improved private and public morals.

CHAPTER VI

JOSÉ ECHEGARAY

José Echegaray (1832-1916), the undisputed ruler of the Spanish stage for nearly a quarter of a century, received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1904. Aside from his importance as a dramatist, Echegaray is noted for his contributions in other areas. He was also an outstanding mathematician, engineer, educator, and statesman.

In an era of realistic thesis drama Echegaray came to the Spanish theater with a revival of Romanticism which had long been considered obsolete. But he added his own touches which distinguish his drama from that of his predecessors. He actually created a new romantic melodrama couched in grandiloquent, lyrical language. The passion, fatality, intrigues, and tragic endings were not new. But Echegaray replaced the Romantics' legendary and fantastic plots with contemporary scenes and characters. He also omitted the settings of the middle ages, local color, and the exotic which were present in the dramas of the first half of the century. The effects of his scientific training are evidenced in the precision of his plots and idea development and in his concentration on a few outstanding characters, but in no other aspect is there any

indication of measure. There is an abundance of theatrical effects. The dramatic situations are forced, sensational, and implausible, with little trace of truth or logic. His plays are violent, at times grotesque, and filled with oppressive gloom. His works were truly a reflection of his belief that "lo sublime del arte está en el llanto, en el dolor, y en la muerte."[1]

Echegaray began writing for the stage in 1873 and some of his first plays are most reminiscent of the traditional romantic dramas of the first part of the century. However he soon turned to psychological, idealogical, problem plays, and those still retained many romantic elements. The scenes, characters, and plots are contemporary, but the apparent realism is lost to much artificiality. From his creative imagination and inventiveness came the volcanic passions of hysterical, almost abnormal characters. They are caught in situations which are possible but which become exaggerated beyond the point of plausibility. Sáinz de Robles sums it up this way:

> Echegaray no fué un realista romántico, ni un romántico realista, ni un realista, ni un clásico. Fué un neorromántico, que pretendió desarrollar los problemas más candentes de la realidad entre los extremos del más feroz romanticismo trasnochado y

---

[1]Richard E. Chandler and Kessel Schwartz, A New History of Spanish Literature (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), p. 124.

del más afectado retoricismo incipiente.[2]

Echegaray was a crowd pleaser. He admitted in his memoirs that he would have liked to have more psychological study of character, but this, he felt, bored the public. Therefore he created personages who generally lack humanity and psychological depth. Driven by fate or by some unrelenting obsession, they are almost elevated to the position of deities as their lofty motives and ideals cause them to renounce friends, family, love, position, and money for duty. Torn by opposing duties or by a conflict between passion and duty their motivating ideals are far above those of real human beings. In this struggle of conscience and heart versus duty and honor the latter usually wins.

Sáinz de Robles also reminds us that Clarín had compared Echegaray's drama to a bullfight

> por la angustia, por el colorido, por el arte, por el aburrimiento, por la falsedad, por el realismo, por la grandiosidad y por la vulgaridad que puede haber en las dos, en el tiempo breve de su duración.[3]

Within this romantic framework which Echegaray applied to social problems of the time there was a didactic note though it seldom was overtly stated. The lesson is implied through the depiction of the unfortunate consequences of sin. Not only do the sinners themselves

---

[2]Federico Carlos Sáinz de Robles, El teatro español, historia y antología (Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1943), p. 576.

[3]Sáinz de Robles, p. 579.

suffer, but the innocent, who often are children, must also share the penalty of wrongdoing.

Time and time again Echegaray was assailed by the critics for his lack of verisimilitude. Instead of offering the theory that the theater does not have to be an exact depiction of life and that the necessary element of drama is that it be accepted by the audience, he chose to defend himself. He claimed that the actions in his plays paralleled those in real life and that often he had based his plots upon actual events he had witnessed. This is most interesting, for it implies that Echegaray agreed with his reviewers that truth and reality were significant and necessary aspects of good drama.

Some have attacked him unmercifully for his bombastic, sensational drama, accusing him of destroying the serious theater of the Ayala, Tamayo, and Gaspar tradition. Yet others have lauded his salvation of the Spanish theater which they felt had fallen into an abyss of neglect. Whatever may be the interpretation of his role, it cannot be denied that he stood unchallenged until the appearance of Galdós in 1892 and even then he continued to have an enthusiastic coterie of admirers. Not only was he the most popular dramatist of the last twenty-five years of the century, he was also the most famous and most popular Spanish playwright since the Golden Age.

O locura o santidad (1877) and El gran galeoto

(1881), are recognized as two of Echegaray's best dramas. While they are romantic in nature they have contributing monetary motivations and social theses based thereon. Although this author is not primarily considered a serious dramatic moralist, his treatment of and attitudes toward the money question as presented in these works deserve attention.

O LOCURA O SANTIDAD[4]

Wealthy and respected Lorenzo, meditating on don Quixote, draws the thesis of the play from the "saint of La Mancha" and states this thesis in the form of the theorem that the world would consider absolute integrity not as sanctity but as insanity. He learns from his childhood nurse, Juana, that she is actually his mother and that she had given him to her employers to take the place of their son who had died. He insists on renouncing his name publicly and restoring his inherited wealth to distant relatives of his foster parents, who are the rightful but undeserving heirs. To do so will benefit no one and will bring tragedy to his mother, to his wife, and to his daughter. It will destroy that for which his mother, Juana, had sacrificed her life and maternal love. The affluence and social status of his wife, Ángela, will

---

[4] O locura o santidad, a three act drama in prose, was first presented at the Teatro Español, January 22, 1877.

become poverty and humiliation. His daughter, Inés, will lose all hope of marrying her beloved Eduardo, son of a duquesa. His determination to consummate this travesty of idealism despite the pleading of all concerned arouses doubts of his sanity in the minds of his family and friends. In a final desperate effort, the dying Juana destroys the only documentary proof and denies that she is his mother. When his dramatic gesture of producing documentary evidence reveals only a blank paper, all except Inés become convinced of his madness and he is carried away to an asylum.

As one would expect from the pen of Echegaray, this drama is filled with sombre, melodramatic, and romantic elements. So that the audience would assume the proper mood and prepare itself for the gloom that was to engulf the characters the author indicated that the stage should be set to represent a dimly lit room, adorned with dark furniture and draperies, on a winter day. Present in this drama are the obvious romantic elements of love, honor, truth, fate, tragedy, unknown parentage, a chance reunion, mysterious papers, and thwarted love.

Echegaray superimposed upon the romantic themes of his earlier plays a treatment of social problems. He particularly dealt with those with pathological or psychological implications so that the dramas of his second period are in part character studies of troubled individuals. O locura o santidad falls into this second

group. This play was supposedly written as a result of Echegaray's visiting an insane asylum.

Goldberg quotes Echegaray in saying that "fate writes greater tragedies than playwrights."[5] But it appears from a study of Echegaray's plays that fate is a social phenomenon. In this case Lorenzo, the protagonist, is not struggling against other individuals but with his conscience. Earlier social and economic pressures caused him to be what he is, where he is. These events over which he had no control have now come to light. This forces him to decide whether to follow his quixotic idealism or succumb to the demands of family life. This problem which he must resolve is hinted at in the opening scene of the play. Lorenzo is reading aloud Don Quijote's words in which he regrets having succumbed to the madness brought on by the chivalresque novels he read. Lorenzo reflects upon the constant quixotesque struggle to seek justice and pursue idealism which even today is characterized as insanity.

This honorable man is rich and well educated, loved by his family and respected by his friends. He committed no crime and is accused of none. Yet he decides that he has no claim to name and fortune and deliberately divests himself of those things for which most men strive during lifetime. Although this renunciation is noble in

---

[5]Isaac Goldberg, The Drama of Transition (Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Co., 1922), p. 64.

conception, it places the fate of his family in jeopardy. If Lorenzo can show proof of Juana's story all will accept his sanity. But this means deprivation, the separation of Eduardo and Inés, and Inés' probable death of a broken heart. On the other hand if the verdict is insanity, Lorenzo will be sent away from home and with his story discredited the lovers can be married. These alternatives are extremely difficult. His idealistic behavior has worked such thoughtless hardship on others that virtue in the eyes of the audience becomes a fault and goodness approaches sin. If Echegaray's thesis is that genuine honesty may be taken for madness, he may mean to imply that pure, idealistic behavior, which should be prevalent and normal, is so seldom seen that it appears abnormal to contemporary soceity.

Money appears as a motivating factor governing the behavior of most of the characters. Juana was poor and unwed. She relinquished her child out of consideration for his future well-being. She gave him to a couple who needed an heir in order to retain long-term financial security. Lorenzo's adoptive father knew his death was imminent and he wished to prevent his wife's return to poverty. Since the couple was childless his fortune would revert to his father. Therefore the couple offered to adopt the child of their servant.

When Lorenzo plans to renounce his wealth and position he tells his wife that poverty holds no fear

for him. He says that he will willingly support his family by his work. Ángela can accept privations with good grace but she cannot see family name and honor destroyed. Eduardo attempts to solve the dilemma. He would also see the money relinquished and restored to the rightful heir as long as Inés' family keeps its good reputation. In this the Duquesa concurs. From the beginning family name, in her case a title, means infinitely more than mere wealth.

Unlike most dramas where finance plays a major role, the problem here is not how to obtain, increase, and keep money, but instead how or whether one should dispose of it.

EL GRAN GALEOTO[6]

Julián is a wealthy, generous man of honor. He has given a home to Ernesto, the son of a late friend. But Ernesto feels uncomfortable. He believes he is living on charity. Also gossip is linking his name with that of Julián's wife, Teodora, who is closer to Ernesto's age than that of her husband. Julián's brother, Severo, his wife, Mercedes, and their son, Pepito, also make their home with Julián. Jealous of the latter's wealth, they have become perpetrators of this malicious gossip.

---

[6] El gran galeoto, first presented in 1881, has a prologue in prose; the remainder of the play is in verse.

Severo sows seeds of doubt in Julián's mind for he hopes to rid himself of these two who are threats to his inheriting all of Julián's wealth. Julián learns that Ernesto is to fight a duel with a man who slandered Teodora's name. He decides to kill the man himself. When he is brought wounded to the garret to which Ernesto has moved he finds Teodora there. Though she has come only to prevent the duel, Julián believes the worst. Severo prevents any reconciliation. He keeps Teodora and Julián apart until Julián's death. He then tells Teodora to leave his house. Ernesto says they will leave together for the world has decreed that it be thus.

El gran galeoto, whose theme parallels that of Othello, caused Echegaray to be praised as a second Shakespeare. The play is a masterful study of a universal social problem. It is written around the framework of an honor tragedy and is filled with emotional speeches. Even in reading this play the excessive emotional intent of the author is evident, for he employs exclamation points more frequently than periods. While one might think that such flamboyance would detract from the seriousness of his social thesis, the opposite seems to be true.

Like O locura o santidad this drama is a psychological character study. But it has a most interesting and unique feature. In the prologue Ernesto expounds to Julián about the play he is struggling to write. He says that the principal character never appears

because it is the whole of mankind. As in Ernesto's proposal for his drama, the major "character" in the real play is todo el mundo, or "everyone." This character is society, the perpetrator of malicious gossip, slanderous innuendos, and false accusations. It makes the innocent appear guilty because it not only expects but sometimes looks for the errors in others' ways. Because it seeks these errors it finds them even where none exist and, going one step further, society may actually drive the virtuous to err. Pepito expresses the inventing and spreading of gossip in this way:

> ¿Fué una vez? Pues basta. Si les han visto cien personas ese día, es para el caso lo mismo que haberse mostrado en público, no en un día, en cien distintos.[7]

An undesired romance is sponsored under a mushrooming cloud of suspicion and doubt by the protagonist which is everybody. The result is an eventual unsought alliance. In this role society serves as the intermediary in the alleged love affair, hence the title El gran galeoto, the great go-between. Gallehaut (Galeotto in Italian) was the squire of Sir Lancelot in the Arthurian legend who acted as a go-between for his master and Guinevere, the king's wife. In Canto V of Dante's Inferno there is a tale of the illicit love of Francesca da Rimini for Paolo, her husband's brother. In

---

[7]José Echegaray, El gran galeoto, in anthology by Brett, p. 749.

their case, the act of reading together the story of this legendary love was the Galeotto which fired their own romantic relationship. This is the origin of the title of Echegaray's play.[8]

Julián's immense fortune is a strong, underlying motive for the entire action of the play. If his brother Severo and his family possess as much love for Julián as they outwardly proclaim they would not report the rumors to him concerning his wife in such inconsiderate and inflammatory ways. Neither would they support these tales in public, as seems to be the case.

We know that Severo's immediate family is living in separate quarters in Julián's house. In the last act Teodora reminds him that as long as her husband is alive she is mistress in this house. Severo becomes so enraged that he violently grasps her arm. As we have learned, when a childless woman is widowed at least the major portion of her late husband's estate goes to the closest blood relative. This is a consideration which must underly Severo's thoughts and actions. It certainly will explain his attempts to convince Julián of Teodora's wrongdoing. In all probability he hopes that his brother will force Teodora to leave forever. This will remove the threat of a future heir.

Severo also harbors a dislike for Ernesto. Julián

---

[8]Brett, p. 751.

treats Ernesto like a son and has promised him a large settlement if he should marry. Therefore if Severo can discredit Ernesto the family fortune will be preserved intact. Severo carefully fosters Julián's tortured thoughts until the end and prevents any deathbed reconciliation between husband and wife. As soon as he knows that Julián is dead Severo cries, referring to Teodora, "¡Esa mujer en mi casa! ... ¡Pronto ... arroja a esa mujer!"[9]

Julián is proud of his wealth and solidarity of credit which he protects with caution in business. Yet he admits never avidly seeking money and he is most generous to Ernesto and Severo in providing them with a home.

Teodora has enjoyed some of the luxuries money can provide but she never demonstrates any concern for financial security. We have no reason to believe that the marriage of this younger woman to an older man bordered upon speculation. Her constant attempts at reconciliation with Julián as he is nearing death spring from her deep feeling of love for him, not from any desire for a final material or monetary settlement.

Ernesto has known both opulence and poverty. Now once again he is living an easy life with promise of a sizable endowment if he marries. Yet he feels

---

[9]Echegaray, El gran galeoto, p. 784.

uncomfortable living on the charity of his benefactor and embraces an opportunity to earn his keep through steady employment as Julián's secretary. Also this charming, handsome youth makes no endeavor to seek a wife in an attempt to gain complete independence and a fortune. In fact, he leaves his elegant surroundings for a miserable garret. In the final scene he ignores the financial hardship it may pose and takes on the responsibility of Teodora.

In summation Julián and Teodora, those who have money, are not avaricious or selfish with their wealth. They accept it as a normal adjunct to living. Ernesto is the poet-dreamer to whom money itself means little. However, honor, pride, and independence are sufficiently important to him and he is inspired to work at a desk ten hours a day in order to maintain his self-respect. Conversely, Severo is impelled by feelings of jealousy, envy, and inferiority. He covets his brother's possessions and wealth and he is willing to risk the happiness and future well-being of three innocent, honorable people to obtain them.

CHAPTER VII

BENITO PÉREZ GALDÓS

Benito Pérez Galdós (1843-1920), better known as one of the finest novelists of the last half of the nineteenth century, was also a dramatist of merit. A master of Spanish realism, Galdós presented in his dramas a compassionate view of a society greatly in need of regeneration. He was a keen critic of the inefficient, unthrifty bourgeoisie and the parasitic, decadent aristocracy, and a man with profound sympathy for the problems of the proletariat. His aim was to teach Spaniards how to remake and remold their way of life and their country. He attacked the political corruption, the indifference toward the general need for social and economic reforms, and the hypocritical spurious religiosity that was prevalent. Although he is sometimes accused of being anti-religious, it is more accurate to say that he was anti-clerical. He lashed out at the dogmatic and routine religious behavior which was exemplified by an external formalism only, rather than a true spirituality or an abiding sense of Christian principles. Galdós himself was indifferent to conventional religion. His creed was live by truth and salvation will follow.

Optimism led him to imply repeatedly in his works his innate faith in people. He believed that they had within themselves the power of regeneration if only they wholeheartedly embraced the tenets of truth and virtue and learned to accept with stoicism the fact that some bitterness must be accepted along with the sweet. It was his belief that institutions and society would be corrected as a natural result of individual reform. He emphasized the dignity of work and exalted the accomplishments of the self-made man as part of his suggested program for Spanish self-improvement.

Galdós was primarily a reformer and thinker rather than an entertainer or evangelist. He was self-composed and dignified with a tolerance and objectivity rare among Spanish authors. In his plays he modernized Spanish dramatic art by abandoning the use of asides and soliloquies. He also eliminated affected rhetoric and avoided the melodramatic devices of the Echegaray school. Gregersen calls attention to the fact that Galdós' rejection of Echegaray's arte dramática was conscious and deliberate. He cites the following statement about Echegaray made by Galdós as early as 1885:

> No obstante las cualidades de tan grande escritor, su teatro se nos presenta hoy un tanto apartado del gusto dominante ... Sólo diré que cada vez son más marcadas en nuestro público las preferencias por todo aquello que le presenta el cuadro siempre bello, de la vida ordinaria, y que los afectos tumultuosos y excepcionales no cautivan su ánimo como lo cautivaban

hace algunos años.[1]

Galdós created a realistic yet analytical and philosophical drama which at times is also very symbolic. His characters are skillfully created, reflecting Galdós' perceptive knowledge of human nature. They never become puppets of the author to the extent that they act and react "out of character." Galdós has probed their minds, placed them in a situation, then allowed them as individuals to work out the solution in accordance with ideals and attitudes engendered by their social environment. His purpose is to make the audience think. However because of Galdós' preoccupation with his thesis his characters still appear more obviously to be incarnations of the ideas with which they are obsessed. This technique often results in the creation of characters with psychological eccentricities.

Brenan observes that

> Galdós' outlook on the world was above everything that of a moralist. No weakness escapes his eye: he is the incorruptible reporter who cannot be flattered into putting a good face on bad things. . . . He forgives because he understands all the particulars of the case and because, when one understands that, one must either forgive everyone or no one.[2]

Yet Galdós is never guilty of blatant moralizing; he leaves the inference to the theater audience.

---

[1]Halfdan Gregersen, Ibsen and Spain (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1936), p. 44.

[2]Gerald Brenan, The Literature of the Spanish People (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), p. 405.

His lack of theatrical sense, his proclivity for including minute detail, and his involvement in the psychological aspects of his dramas caused him to write acts which were too long and too slow moving for an audience that had become accustomed to the rapid pace set by Echegaray.

Reactions to Galdós' plays were varied. From his intense interest in humanity and preoccupation with the problems of Spain came his suggestions of constructive measures for social, economic, and political reforms. For some people his ideas of breaking away from the conventional, traditional Spain of yesterday to achieve the sounder Spain of tomorrow were far too radical. Certain of his dramas were, in effect, placed on the Index, and occasionally, from fear of partial boycott, Madrid theaters refused to present his works. For this reason Mariucha (1903) premiered in Barcelona, a city much more receptive to new artistic expression and advanced thought.

Nevertheless Galdós stands with Echegaray as one of the two most significant dramatists of the period after the Revolution of 1868. The very qualities which cause a number of his plays to be considered too radical by some were the characteristics that marked him as the true reformer of the Spanish stage and a precursor of Jacinto Benavente and the Generation of '98.

Four of Galdós' twenty-six plays are considered in this study. Other moralists and thesis dramatists

attacked the acquisition of money but Galdós encourages just that. He does it however in a different way, for he recommends work as a solution to the problems of financial insecurity. Following are discussions of La loca de la casa (1893), La de San Quintín (1894), Voluntad (1895), and Mariucha (1903).

LA LOCA DE LA CASA[3]

The wealthy Moncada has two daughters, Gabriela and Victoria. Gabriela is engaged to Jaime, son of an impoverished Marquesa. Her other son Daniel presently plans to enter a religious order because Victoria, whom he loved, rejected him to enter a convent. Moncada learns he is financially ruined. His sister Eulalia and his financial advisor Huguet promote a marriage between Gabriela and the crude, self-made multi-millionaire Cruz. Cruz is willing because he wants to merge his wealth with the respected Moncada name, but Gabriela refuses. Victoria returns home prior to taking her final vows. She decides to sacrifice herself to save her father and she weds Cruz. Cruz loves money above all else and when Victoria tries to give some to the poor Marquesa they have an argument. Victoria leaves Cruz and during the

---

[3]La loca de la casa, a four act drama in prose, was first presented at the Teatro de la Comedia, Madrid, on January 16, 1893.

separation they realize they love each other. When Cruz learns Victoria is pregnant he seeks a reconciliation. She agrees to return to him provided he will use some of his money benevolently.

La loca de la casa is Galdós' second drama to be presented on the stage. In this work he depicts contemporary Spanish thoughts and characteristics through natural lifelike dialogue. He attacks the aristocracy which he feels has become slothful and indolent. With the restoration of 1874 came political calm. In a newly flourishing economy the aristocracy and bourgeoisie gradually adopted more realistic standards and ultimately became complacent. The aristocrats seemingly considered their position and wealth as intrinsic to their station and appeared unwilling or unable to make constructive efforts to retain or restore their faltering fortunes when they found themselves in financial peril. It is this inefficiency and lack of initiative that Galdós depicts and attacks.

The employment of symbolism throughout the play is very evident. The title, La loca de la casa, is a Spanish refrán which refers to the mind being the loca, the whimsical, sometimes wise, sometimes capricious guardian of the body, the casa. The expression also signifies imagination and is exemplified by Victoria who is both the "madwoman of the house" and imagination personified. Cruz and Victoria each symbolize opposing

values and the juxtaposition of these two characters is the crux of the play.

Cruz is a near-primitive self-made man. He is the son of a cartwright and as a child he lived in a tower on Moncada's estate. This crude, common man of low birth is one of those adventuresome ones who went to America and returned to Spain immensely wealthy. He is an avaricious miser and he openly admits his love of money. In spite of his fortune he still remains uncouth and unpolished. A rebel in his late teens, he had been sent by his father, who was tired of struggling with him, to Mazatlán via Cape Horn. Cruz recommends this trip as an education in how to live to the Marquesa's sons, a doctor and a lawyer, whom he scorns. He calls them weak youths who expect to earn their livelihood from book learning.

Cruz exhibits appalling frankness and honesty. He shows no trace of hypocrisy and his word is as good as a legal document. Cruz has amassed a large fortune but he still believes himself to be his own first and best workman. He does not hesitate to take on the management of Moncada's failing factory or even to climb the roof to repair its smouldering chimneys himself. He epitomizes the gospel of hard work motivated by vigor and drive. Galdós advocates and applauds this. But the author is quick to point out that the glaring flaw is his avaricious tenacity and singleness of purpose which exemplify the positivism and materialism of the nineteenth century.

From the importance placed upon the construction of an orphanage it is obvious that Galdós recognizes the merit in worthwhile charitable institutions. But he uses Cruz as his raisonneur to bitterly attack overdependence on public benevolence. He says that such reliance upon charity results in slothful degeneracy. According to Cruz, giving money to charity is protecting begging and encouraging vagrancy and vice. The recipient of this misguided compassion is deprived of the stimulation to seek gainful employment which can rescue him from his own misery.

Cruz marries neither for love nor financial speculation but because he wishes to triumph over his low origin. He wants to add the name and seal of respectability to his hard-won wealth, vigor, and drive. He hopes to create a future family which will be a cornerstone in building a new generation. At the conclusion of the play his harshness is tempered by the influence of redeeming love. However his essential strength and pride remain intact.

Victoria is a refined, high-born lady of generous nature. She is loyal and devoted to her family and is imbued with a high degree of self-sacrificing piety. She is as courageous and dedicated to work and difficult tasks as is her counterpart Cruz but in all other aspects she is his exact opposite. Victoria chose a life of selfless dedication to helping the poor and needy. When she finds

her father among those requiring her ministry she elects to leave the convent to answer her calling in the secular world. She has lamented the fact that at the convent she has not been given more arduous and difficult tasks. Her marriage to Cruz is an extremely difficult sacrifice and it is a challenge which she accepts.

Although Victoria admits marrying for financial gain to save her family from ruin, she is unlike other young ladies who sought marriage of convenience. Victoria hesitates in her decision only because she wonders if this is a proper direction for the unselfish service she intended to render to the convent, not because of any consideration for her own future happiness or pleasure. Furthermore she consents to this marriage from a sense of religious or socialistic idealism. She also hopes that she may channel Cruz' wealth into good works and worthwhile projects.

Galdós is suggesting a merging of classes and a blending of purposes and ideals. He hopes to dispel the preconceived prejudices that those who work for monetary rewards are misguided, crude individuals, and that those who are dedicated to religious service are excessively and unrealistically good. Galdós is encouraging a uniting of the mundane with the less worldly goals. He hopes that through the uniting of these two opposing forces a regenerative and progressive spirit will be produced in Spain. Victoria and Cruz represent these two opposites

and the fact that they admit that they cannot live one without the other gives further symbolic emphasis to Galdós' thesis.

In the once-wealthy Moncada Galdós hints at the problem of many of the upper middle class of the last decade of the century. Many who had enjoyed a life of opulence suffered financial reverses. Through either a lack of initiative or skill they resigned themselves to their fate. They did not think about possible steps toward salvation but merely lamented their plight. Victoria's father openly confesses his poverty to those around him. He seems to dread rather than fear the life that lies ahead and he states with resignation that esteem cannot be regained even though money can. Yet he does not take any positive steps toward reconstructing his fortune. Selling out is his solution. His factory apparently holds a potential which Cruz is able to develop and bring to fruition. But in the hands of Moncada it is poorly managed and inefficiently operated. Although Moncada is aware of all this, it is something which he seems unwilling and unable to remedy. If he were industrious and farsighted this plant could be the starting point for a second fortune. But the audience can almost see him shrug his shoulders as he plans to spend his last days in the poorhouse. He admits that he would like to have his daughter Gabriela marry Cruz, for such a union would produce financial security. Yet he

neither pressures her nor looks beyond the immediate personal advantages which will solve his current problems. There is no indication that he has further plans for constructive action. One wonders how such an apparently ineffectual and undynamic individual managed to accrue a fortune or even to capitalize upon an inherited one.

Eulalia is a faithful devotee of an outward form of religion rather than a true practitioner of Christian principles. This gossiper vehemently denounces money and her brother for acquiring it, even while she enjoys the luxuries and freedom that self-same wealth provides her. She tells her brother that his reversals are God's punishment for his consuming desire for wealth and that on judgment day the angels will ask him for his "buenas acciones, no por las del banco."[4] Then she hypocritically plots with Huguet to promote a marriage of speculation between Gabriela and Cruz when family fortunes ebb. She is an archtype female do-gooder who busies herself with community activities in the name of religion and piety. Eulalia, like many characters in the Galdosean novel, is another of the pseudo-religious hypocrites whom the author detested.

In the strong revival of Evangelical interest in Catholicism prevalent in the upper-middle classes of this period, women played a prominent role. Organizations

---

[4]Benito Pérez Galdós, Obras completas (Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1942), p. 583.

were master-minded by

> female piety of the "elegant, sanctimonious swarm" of beatas . . . "pompous and useless" aristocratic ladies who ran committees against white slavery or who organized protests and social boycots.[5]

Daniel is a romantic. Though unlike Victoria in character, he has also contemplated a cloistered life. He had planned to enter the monastery after Victoria's rejection of him much earlier. However he comes to realize that his religious fervor is only a transference of his idolatrous love for Victoria and he decides to return to his law office. Through these people who in some way associate themselves with religious activities Galdós suggests that members of religious orders should examine their motives and be certain of their callings.

Representative of the pauperized aristocrat is the Marquesa. Her husband had been one of the first businessmen of Cataluña but when he died he left his widow in debt. He was fired by the fever of advancement and lived only to visit foreign fairs and expositions in order to bring home the latest types of agricultural equipment and machinery. The Marqués was a victim of civilization and progress. Because of this the Marquesa has had to endure many hardships. She recalls staying up late sewing for her boys, selling wool from her sheep at retail, storing potatoes in hopes of better prices,

---

[5]Raymond Carr, Spain 1808-1939 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 465.

washing her own clothes, and asking friends for books for her sons to study.

Through the Marquesa Galdós presents two of his beliefs. Although material progress is important to Spain, over-reliance and over-emphasis should not be placed upon scientific developments. He also stresses that honest appraisal of one's financial and material assets should be followed by the best use of those at hand plus diligent and imaginative work. This can often produce admirable and practical results leading to an improved situation now and for future generations.

Galdós is a sincere reformer who understands and forgives human frailties but he is not a revolutionist. He believes in the merit of work and the virtue of sincere idealism. Galdós advocates measured material progress and approves honestly motivated dedication to religious and social institutions that serve a worthy function. He is convinced that there should be a blending of the ideals of the old aristocracy with the diminishing assets of the inefficient bourgeoisie and the drive of the rising proletariat. Galdós contends that this will produce a solid foundation for the renovation and revitalization of Spain.

LA DE SAN QUINTÍN[6]

José Buendía is a wealthy, rather miserly patriarch who rules his family and businesses with an iron hand. He wants his son César to marry to insure the future of the dynasty. César however has a natural son, Victor, whom he intends to legitimize, but before doing so, he puts him to hard work in an effort to reform the socialistic inclinations of the youth. José's distant niece Rosario, the impoverished Duquesa de San Quintín, comes to stay with the family. She falls in love with the talented, democratic minded Victor. A Marqués, who despises César because of humiliations suffered at his usurious hands, plans to give César letters which prove Victor is not his son. Rosario also hates César for slandering her mother's name years before, but she does not want Victor to be robbed of name and fortune. Therefore she asks and receives possession of the letters so she can decide about their disposal. César is courting Rosario but he again antagonizes her. Since Victor says that truth must always prevail and that money is of little importance to him, Rosario decides to give the letters to César. When Victor learns of their content he disappears. However he later returns to prove his independence of the Buendía family and to take Rosario with him to America, where he has accepted a position in

---

[6]La de San Quintín, a three act play in prose, was first presented in 1894.

Pennsylvania.

After the appearance of La de San Quintín Galdós was generally accepted and praised as a noteworthy dramatist. Even the newspaper El Socialista applauded his efforts toward social betterment. Their Marxian critic believed this work to depict a battle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and he attributed significance to the wording of the title, which relates to Spanish history. In 1557 Enrique II of France broke a treaty with Spain's Felipe II. The result was a Spanish invasion and attack upon the city of San Quintín. In spite of heroic resistance by the French at the Battle of San Quintín the Spanish troops gloriously defeated the French. Since then the phrase La de San Quintín has had symbolic meaning. Berkowitz discusses this and the Marxian critic's interpretation of the title of the drama. He says that Galdós used the expression

> La de San Quintín and not La Duquesa de San Quintín, as the author might have phrased it if he had not wished to express the idea which that phrase carries within itself in ordinary current language, namely, "the furious battle is about to break out" when reference is made to a bloody and disastrous event. Thus, if we keep in mind the generating idea of the play, is not La de San Quintín a title which, without the euphemism imposed by circumstances, might easily be changed to The Social Revolutions? But the thoughtful critics with no ideological ax to grind missed in La de San Quintín the dawn of a new day on the Spanish dramatic horizon. They even ventured to question the soundness of its social theme.[7]

---

[7] Chonon H. Berkowitz, Pérez Galdós, the Spanish Liberal Crusader (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1948), pp. 268-269.

Further symbolism is found in the famous kneading scene. Rosario, aided by Victor, is preparing and baking little cakes. She blends the yolks and the sugar which are the aristocracy of blood and that of wealth. She then amalgamates the aristocracy with the populace, common flour. She mixes this with the butter, the middle class, which holds everything together. Rosario begins to knead the dough vigorously. She says it will be necessary to mix it over again as she is doing, to pound it and to roll it out to arrive at something different. But, she continues, because we are unable to make a new world, a new society, and a new people, we must accept the human gingerbread man as the cooks of old formed him.

Victor is the only socialist Galdós ever placed upon the stage but he is a romantic socialist. According to Deleito y Piñuela this is not an unusual combination to find, for in the Spain of 1894 socialism was pure romanticism.[8] One could hardly consider Victor to be a typical socialist. He received an extensive, expensive education abroad furnished by the funds of his wealthy benefactor, César. Rather he is an idealistic romantic with democratic notions. He never implies that he has partaken of any of the suffering or disillusionment of the masses, with the possible exception of a prison term which resulted from his socialistic agitation. Even then

---

[8]José Deleito y Piñuela, Estampas del Madrid teatral fin de siglo (Madrid: Saturnino Calleja, 1946), p. 188.

he sought aid from César who refused to render help. Later we see Victor abandon and renounce his beliefs when romance makes security seem to have practical value. When he learns of the loss of name and wealth he reacts with the disappointment which is normally expected of anyone. Yet he quickly resigns himself to his impoverishment. Victor never objects to the hard manual labor to which he has been sentenced in order to insure his reform. On the contrary, he seems proud of his talent and ability and the education of his own choosing which made him skilled in many fields. While he has no degrees in any area, the training he obtained is of the most practical sort. His experiences, his intuitive know-how, his incentive and ambition to succeed for himself and his future family are the greatest of assets for a venture in industrial Pennsylvania.

From the titled family of Rosario insight is gained into two generations. One typifies the past; the other exemplifies a pattern which Galdós recommends for the present. Rosario's father was a wealthy, improvident aristocrat. He was unable to halt the dissipation of his assets even though he enlisted the aid of the financially sagacious José Buendía. Like so many other inefficient members of his class he found himself eventually ruined. As José remarks to Rosario, trying to hold her father to a budget was like putting up gates in an open field. Because of this José admonished Rosario,

> La riqueza que viene a ser como la anguila, se desliza de las manos blandas, finas, afeminadas del aristócrata, para ser cogida por las manos ásperas, callosas del trabajador. Admite esta lección, y apréndetela de memoria, Rosarito de Trastamara, descendiente de príncipes y reyes, mi sobrina en segundo grado.[9]

Rosario's late husband was also among the spendthrifts. He was lured to ruin by easy credit and he bequeathed her at his death nothing but debts which necessitated her selling or pawning everything of market value. When she arrives at the Buendía home she displays an aristocratic attitude toward servants. She is curt and impatient with them. Yet she makes no endeavor to conceal her lack of funds and with good grace performs the tasks usually delegated to servants. In fact she says she welcomes this opportunity to cast aside the false pretentions of her former life, for she has been longing for simplicity and truth. Her practicality gives her the incentive to learn, to apply herself to domestic chores, and even to consider the possibility of having to earn a living. Rosario joyfully displays her new-found pleasure and sense of accomplishment gained from the performance of simple household duties. This furnishes an amusing note especially to twentieth-century readers as we see her rhapsodizing over the folding and stacking of freshly ironed linens.

While she does not condone Victor's radical ideas,

---

[9]Benito Pérez Galdós, La de San Quintín, in anthology by Brett, p. 824.

neither does she condemn him for them. She respects his democratic attitudes and as she faces her own plight she admits that she would prefer to lower herself on the social scale rather than accede to a distasteful marriage. She is willing to wed a man of low station and to seek gainful employment. Rosario is imbued with the century-old principles of honor and pride which so often are misdirected by other aristocrats who equate the maintenance of externals with them. Rosario demonstrates a deeper understanding of these qualities through her desire to live honorably, free from debt and clear of conscience.

The immensely wealthy José boasts of his accomplishments. He exemplifies the nouveau riche. This proletarian by birth rose through his own efforts and ingenuity to the heights of the middle class and the aristocracy of wealth. He is a scrupulously efficient businessman who abhors needless extravagance. Nevertheless he demonstrates traits of genuine warmth and compassion. Unhesitatingly he tells his son that they must help Rosario financially and he insists upon her remaining as their guest until she has decided upon her future course of action. When César breaks ties with Victor he offers him compensation. José strongly disapproves of César's trying to give Victor an unseaworthy ship which, as José says, is rotten in every timber. José obviously is an opportunist who knows how to accrue a fortune in diversified industries and land holdings. Yet he is quick

to point out to Rosario that he acquired her family properties through legal purchase, a fact which we have no reason to doubt. He appears to be an honest, honorable, and astute money-maker with a miserly streak. Though an octogenarian, he still manages his business and family in a firm and dictatorial manner.

Though he does not openly state it, José thinks his son to be somewhat weak and incapable of carrying on the family tradition and fortune he has established. He tells his fifty-five year-old son, whom he still considers a boy, to marry the fishwife who has part interest in his canneries in order to insure the family's future.

César shows independence chiefly through his numerous love affairs which were a source of constant embarrassment to his father as well as to his wife during her lifetime. Unlike his father, César was notorious for his unscrupulous and usurious business practices. This tends to indicate that he lacks capability and enterprise. He turns to questionable dealings to secure the money which he cannot make honestly nor otherwise retain. He probably fears that he may become one of the many who have inherited their second generation wealth but ultimately find themselves ruined due to this same inadequacy and inefficiency. César comes the nearest to being a black villain of any character presented by Galdós. Nonetheless he exhibits a certain commendable parental pride in educating Victor and supervising his activities and he

intends to recognize Victor legally as his son once the latter has conformed to his father's preconceived standards.

César is presented with paternal pressures of his own from José who urges César to marry a wealthy villager. But César prefers to seek Rosario's hand. He professes to love her but it appears that he desires the title and prestige such an alliance will bring to him. Before her arrival in the Buendía household his words regarding her are only scornful and belittling. It is perfectly clear that in a second wife he does not seek wealth, for he rejects his father's original choice who is rich. Neither is he looking for charm which, though finding it in Rosario, he can also procure through his extra-marital activities. Rather he wants a partner who offers the greatest fringe benefits. In his rank egotism he is certain that Rosario will welcome an alliance with him and his money.

This play is not devoid of romantic elements. In Victor we see the stalwart hero of unknown parentage who in part is a self-made man of idealistic philosophy. His wanderings throughout Europe and his impending departure for the new world lend intriguing notes of mystery for the enjoyment of the audience.

Galdós in this play indirectly suggests that he does not find in political action an efficacious means of revitalizing Spain. In his incurable optimism he places

his faith in the regeneration of individuals. Through their cumulative efforts he hopes to see his country realize its potential. In this play he launches an attack on the indolence and inefficiency he observes in contemporary society. But through Victor and Rosario he also stresses the validity of education and the training of talent which can produce admirable results when properly applied. The ultimate solution to the problems of Spain which Galdós offers here is somewhat Utopian. He recommends creating a new society through a melding of social classes and a blending of the old aristocratic values with the emergent democratic ideals.

VOLUNTAD[10]

Isidro and his wife Trinidad own a dry goods store which they are about to lose because of financial problems. The couple has three children. Serafinito, a member of a youthful socialistic-literary group, and Trinita, a devotee of music, are teenagers who are too involved with their own activities to offer any help. The only hope of salvation is their daughter Isidora. In previous times of emergency she managed the business and household better than her parents did. However they have disowned her because she is living without benefit of clergy with a wealthy dreamer

---

[10] Voluntad, a drama in three acts in prose, was first presented on December 20, 1895.

Alejandro. Isidora returns home repentent. Her parents forgive her and relinquish management of home and store to her. She has her siblings abandon their other activities and puts them to work. She collects overdue bills, arranges special sales and not only saves the business but also arranges for its expansion. Isidora still loves Alejandro. She learns that he is now penniless and fears that this fact, coupled with her recent refusal to return to him, will drive him to suicide. But because she tells him that she loves him and that together they will meet the adversities of life, Alejandro regains his will to live. He awakens to reality, they plan to wed, and all ends well.

This drama was coldly received by the audience and ran only six nights. In Voluntad Galdós depicts the abulia with which Spain was afflicted.[11] Even through the title he suggests a solution to this problem. His dual thesis is salvation by work and the symbolic merging of complementary qualities through marriage. Excellent in local color for its depiction of a dry goods store, the setting of the play adds a note of charm.

---

[11]This abulia or lack of will which characterized the lethargic state of Spain of the time is a theme of the Generation of 1898. The term, abulia, borrowed from developing trends in medicine and psychology, was first introduced by Ángel Ganivet in his Idearium español published in 1897. The concept of will-lessness however was a prevailing concern of Spanish writers before this time. In 1896 in En torno al casticismo Miguel de Unamuno spoke in related terms of the stagnation of Spanish vitality which he called "el marasmo actual de España."

Isidro is the owner of a century-old mercantile establishment. He is the perfect example of the man who inherited assets and is baffled by the complexity of managing them. At the mercy of outside forces, he cannot select a wise course of action, and since he is incapable of conducting his affairs properly without external direction he is easy prey to adversity. In spite of his inefficiency and his inability to act, he is determined to fight for the survival of his business even when he has no constructive ideas to suggest. After his daughter starts a rebuilding program he is surprised to find himself able to consummate a deal when she momentarily falters in her responsibilities. Isidro openly admits his timidity and declines to accept an attractive business offer because it involves extra work which he fears he cannot handle. In a sale of fabric he does not strive to drive a good bargain. Instead he agrees to accept a thirty-five per cent reduction in price when Isidora says twenty-five per cent could easily have been arranged. One further example of his lack of ingenuity and organization is seen when he reacts with pleasure and surprise to his daughter's suggestion that they take an inventory of their stock.

In Trinidad we find another weak, self-effacing character. She is at the mercy of circumstances and finds herself unable to cope with her situation at home or in the adjoining store. Like her husband, she is making no concrete plans to meet the crisis. Yet unlike him, she is

ready to bow to the inevitable and live on charity as a guest in her brother-in-law's simple home. Both Trinidad and her husband denounce Isidora's illicit love arrangement. They disown her until they are persuaded that she has repented and reformed. Then they welcome her back into their household. Trinidad sees nothing strange when Isidro and she abdicate their parental authority and allow their oldest child, a girl at that, to assume all business and household responsibilities which are rightly theirs. Isidora informs her mother that they will dispense with the services of a cook and Trinidad willingly takes her younger daughter to the kitchen to instruct and supervise her practice at culinary art.

The teenagers introduce a refreshing note. They are young people who are responding to interests and activities of their time. Also they demonstrate their own abilities to rise to their potential for constructive work when they are challenged and pushed by their older sister. Serafinito is willing to serve as errand boy but he is horrified at the suggestion that he too might don sleeve guards and work behind the counter. Yet he rapidly adapts to his new position. In the final scene he reacts as a typical, well-adjusted youth when he wryly remarks that Alejandro's joining the family will provide another hand for work.

Santos, Isidro's brother, is devoid of prejudice, bigotry, and hypocrisy. He is a sincerely religious,

generous, and forgiving individual. Contented and delighted with his relatively simple but pleasant home and life, he is happy to share what he has with others. He dispenses wheat and potatoes from his small farm among the needy of the town and expects nothing but his own satisfaction and eventual heavenly recognition as his reward. He finds pleasure in hunting, farming, and in the simple chores. But he recognizes and admires business ability of a different sort and highly praises his niece for her sagacity. The only hint of scornful criticism is his remark that a friend, Nicomedes, has his money placed at advantageous interest. In this comment is the implication that Nicomedes is something of an avaricious man and that Santos disapproves of the aquisition of money for money's sake. Santos is the one to whom the repentent Isidora turns, seeking his intercession with her parents. He is the only one who continually hopes for and seeks the marriage of the separated couple. He recognizes the finer attributes of each and believes that the union of these young people who love one another will be a merging of complementary qualities which he instinctively feels will be a benefit both to themselves and to society.

Isidora embodies qualities of will, energy, drive, intelligence, courage, and ambition. These are the characteristics which are so esteemed by the playwright when they are properly directed and tempered with practicality and compassion. Isidora recognizes her

parents' ineffectual management of the business, household, and family. Unafraid of challenge and taxing work, she resolutely takes the helm and brings order and financial salvation to the formerly chaotic and nearly ruined enterprise. Isidora is willing to labor diligently and she insists that her brother and sister do their part. Yet she demands from them only what she herself will deliver. Isidora does not rule with harshness but rather with a gentle insistence. She puts first things first and asks her siblings to make a temporary sacrifice to meet family needs. She does not demand their permanent renunciation of their other activities and interests.

Isidora is ambitious but not avaricious. She aspires to a solid, expanding business, not merely for the monetary rewards but for the pleasure and satisfaction of accomplishment. If she seeks easy money or luxury all she has to do is exploit her lover's fortune. But she leaves him and returns home only with what was originally hers. She brings none of his gifts or money with her.

This astute manager and business woman is still very feminine. Her love for Alejandro endures in spite of her recognition of his faults and her repentent determination to leave him forever. When she learns of his financial ruin she is deeply concerned about this man she understands so well. Regardless of his idolizing and idealizing the poor of the world, he is incapable of facing adversity and poverty, and she knows it.

Alejandro was born rich. He has always lived in the rarified atmosphere inhabited only by the few who have never worked for money and never intend to. He enjoys the good things of life, material, intellectual, artistic, and amorous. He has never had to strive or sacrifice in order to have the leisure and wealth which make such pleasure possible. He is appalled by the thought of work. He has no idea how to accrue money, nor does he want to learn. More than half of the fortune he inherited has slipped away but this does not concern him. He believes that everyone should use his money to live until it is gone. To him money is merely a commodity with which one satisfies the needs of the moment. Yet he is unselfish with it and would unhesitatingly share it with one he loves without question.

In his unrealistic idealism Alejandro assumes that the poor and uneducated, the vagabonds and shepherds of this world, are carefree and happy. To a degree he equates an unfettered life, free of pressing demands, with happiness. In fact he abjures all forms of responsibility. He avoids involvement with business, politics, and careers as he would a plague, and the commitment to marriage he describes as the greatest tyrant of the social order. Yet when financial disaster comes to him his glittering façade is stripped away. This reveals a weak and frightened character with so little strength of will that self-destruction seems the only logical and possible solution.

His philosophy and idealism avail him nothing. But Isidora bolsters his faltering will to live with her strength and love, and she summons in him the ability to face life.

In Isidora and Alejandro we find a battle of wills. Her practical sense directs her toward means of survival; his dreamy imagination leads him to near self-destruction. Galdós believes in the merging of practicality with idealism. Application to productive work should be coupled with the dedication to intellectual idealism. Galdós is certain that this will result in a regenerative spirit leading to the conquest of Spanish lack of will.

MARIUCHA[12]

The Marqués, don Pedro, has been forced by financial reverses to flee to the provinces with his wife Filomena and daughter María. He is counting on help from friends and believes that political favoritism will afford his son Cesáreo a lucrative post. María is humiliated by her father's begging and his refusal to take constructive measures. She meets León, a once wealthy rogue who has reformed. Through hard work León has built a prosperous coal mining business. Inspired by him María sells an elegant gown to get capital for a business selling laces

---

[12]Mariucha is a drama in five acts written in prose. It was first presented at the Teatro Eldorado, Barcelona, July 16, 1903.

and trimmings. She is aided and encouraged by León and the priest, don Rafael. With her business enterprise María manages to keep her family in decorous poverty, as she says. Cesáreo eventually receives a high position and also becomes engaged to a widow who is wealthy. He and his parents now intend to return to Madrid, taking María with them. However she refuses to go as she wishes to continue her business and to marry León. When María's parents are unsuccessful in their attempts to dissuade her, they denounce her and depart, mourning their "dead daughter." Don Rafael, who has stood by María and León, marries the courageous young couple.

Mariucha premiered in Barcelona because it was a city more receptive to advanced ideas than Madrid, the customary site of first performances. This was due to the accurate prediction that the play would not have favorable reception in the aristocratic circles of the capital. It was moderately successful, mainly in the provinces where class lines were not as rigidly drawn and a more democratic spirit prevailed. But the audiences found this dramatized sermon devoid of excitement and entertainment. Again Galdós attacks the slothful degeneracy which characterized the nobility of the turn of the century.

The Marqués de Alto-Rey is the epitome of the indolent, ruined aristocracy for which Galdós has such an aversion. He is the proud egotist who blindly refuses to face reality; optimistic without cause, he is living in a

world of illusion. He is certain that the government and the still-solvent aristocrats will feel it their duty and privilege to assist the impoverished Alto-Rey family. He is almost indignant at the suggestion that this expected outside help might not be forthcoming. He has no qualms about begging for alms from former friends and acquaintances in positions of power and wealth. But in his twisted pride he is appalled at the thought of reducing himself to employment in menial tasks which would yield a small but certain income with which he could fill the now barren larder.

He has no concept of the value of money. He expects the cook to produce lavish meals, beefsteak, and the best of wines, when he has just sent a taxi driver away unpaid since he lacks enough money to pay even four fares. When his wife receives a sum from her mother, don Pedro in no way objects to Filomena's giving this to the priest for religious purposes. His failure to oppose her action does not stem from any strong devotion to the Church but rather from his inability to recognize the benefits he could derive from this money. He is more concerned about financial salvation on a grand scale. He wants sudden restoration to near opulence instead of the acquisition of less impressive sums which will meet the demands of their current needs.

The Marqués never contemplates nor has any intention of doing anything constructive to remedy his

situation. His major contribution is writing mendicant letters. He believes Cesáreo can in some way be his financial savior. He encourages a renewal of relations between his son and the wealthy American widow. Yet apparently the thought of suggesting or promoting a marriage of María to the rich Corral who seeks her hand never crosses his mind.

Don Pedro is oblivious to the extent of the support María provides, though he is grateful to her for what she is doing. He seems more concerned about the fact that she sold her elegant dress than about any personal humiliation she may be suffering. However he naturally is distressed about rumors which question her character because of her frequent meetings with León. One would expect don Pedro to believe that María would discontinue her business activities once they again possess money. But the scornful attitude he displays toward her enterprise, from which he has gladly benefited in the days of their desperation, is truly indicative of his character.

The Marqués admires León for his growing capital but considers it shameful that he works to obtain it. Even though he may disregard León's one youthful, illegal escapade, don Pedro will never consent to a marriage between his daughter and this man. The fact that León is of noble birth in no way compensates for his present social status as laborer and businessman. The Marqués

earlier is happy to acknowledge this man who is wealthier than he. He even turns to León in hope of receiving aid but is denied financial help by León. Later, when the Marqués sees his desire for wealth materializing, even though his position is to be that of a parasite, his contempt for León knows no bounds.

Filomena is as unrealistic and impractical as her husband. While he places his hope for the future in material assistance from outside sources, she is relying upon her religious faith for financial salvation. She, too, comports herself as though they still have money and demonstrates no knowledge of its value. Filomena receives a monetary gift from her mother who has very limited financial resources. But Filomena seems unaware of the depth of the sacrifice her mother has made for them. The Marquesa either does not realize how precarious their situation is or, like her husband, has no concept of how this gift could alleviate their dire predicament or even pay a current debt. She insists that don Rafael accept the money for the Church. This is a contribution she was accustomed to making when she had money to spare and she gives no thought to the fact that if this was the purpose for which her mother intended it, she herself could have made the donation.

Filomena offers no constructive suggestions regarding their plight. Even when María shows them a way to financial security of a sort, this mother does not offer

to assist her daughter in her business. In the end both Filomena and Pedro yield to public social opinion and disown the daughter who has brought bread to their table through honorable work.

In León we see exemplified the Galdosean ideal of a self-made man. He is strong of body, resolute in pursuing a worthy course of action, and honorable in all his dealings. León endures whatever hardships come his way with unfaltering determination and ingenuity. Once he was a person of diametrically opposite qualities, one of the decadent members of the aristocracy who spent his wealth lavishly in the accustomed manner of his kind. However when he became destitute and ill he became introspective and decided to chart a new course for himself. Following incredible hardships he obtained work at the mines of Somonte where he earned his first duro. He sent for his wardrobe which he sold to buy a cart. He then began an independent venture by picking up the coal which spilled from the carts during loading and sold it in nearby towns. From these humble beginnings grew his present lucrative business. He attributes his success to honor, continual work night and day, diligence, promptness, integrity, and a tranquil conscience.

León's story holds a lesson for present day grandees who could profit from his example. The author seems to be saying that it is not too late to emulate León, to repent and to reform, and to become a useful,

productive member of society regardless of past indolence or indifference.

One notes that León does not, through a sense of chivalry or misguided honor, give María the money she asks for when he needs it to meet his own financial obligations. He has won his credit rating at a great cost to himself and he will be ruined if he does not keep his word. In a question of chivalry versus credit, the practical triumphs.

No false pride dictates his behavior, either in the business or social world. The first time María sees him he is working dirty-faced in his coal pit. Even though he has now attained the status of a rising industrialist he does not hesitate to undertake disagreeable tasks.

León demonstrates his sympathy and appreciation for María's courageous initiative in attempting a business enterprise totally foreign to her experience. He devotes countless hours in helping to guide this girl in her new way of living.

María once enjoyed a life of ease and luxury. She arrives at Agramante poor, naïve, and dependent upon her mendicant parents. She goes to the local market and for the first time becomes aware of the simple facts of barter and trade. She plies merchants and buyers alike with questions. She is fascinated as she witnesses laborers selling their surplus goods in order to purchase what they need from others who are doing the same thing. It is here that she discovers a mode of life other than the one she

has always known. This is where she receives her first instruction on the value of money and how it is handled by those who have little.

María is dismayed at the false pride of her father. He belittles gainful employment and turns instead to begging from his friends. Through her admiration for León and the inspiration he provides, María does what no typical girl of nobility would normally even consider: she pioneers in thought and action. She does so even though she is fully aware that her unprecedented undertaking will result in gossip and criticism from the outside world. She is, however, totally unprepared for her family's irrevocable rejection and denunciation.

María is unselfish in her motives and democratic in her relationships with other people. At the behest of her father she swallows her pride and approaches León for financial aid. But María does not denounce him for his refusal. Nor does she, as might be expected of a girl of noble birth, withdraw from future associations with him. While her father behaves toward their servants in a supercilious manner, María treats her maid as confidante and friend.

Having learned to appreciate the truly worthwhile values of life, María stands resolute in her determination to remain in Agramante to marry her mentor. It is not love alone that inspires her decision not to follow her parents. She realizes that in the world to which they are

going they will be little better than scorned parasites. Since she does not want to see her father and mother so labeled, once more she offers to share her life with them.

Don Rafael is the only one besides León who has faith in María. He secretly gives her financial aid from alms given to the Church for the poor. When María's parents become concerned about the amount of money María is acquiting, he merely repeats again, "Creo en María." He never openly criticizes the Marqués for his attitudes and lack of realistic approach to the family plight. However through his encouragement of María and his devotion to the young couple it is clear that don Rafael admires their courage and initiative. At the end of the play Cesáreo and his parents call upon the local mayor, a judge, and even a bishop in their endeavors to force María to return to Madrid and to prevent her marrying León. But don Rafael stands courageously beside the lovers, so strong is his belief that they are doing the right thing. Considering previous observations regarding Galdós' attitudes toward the clergy it is surprising that he should present a man of the cloth as such a sympathetic and admirable character.

Cesáreo typifies the impoverished grandee who is searching for financial advantages and political power through favors granted by influential friends. He bears the brunt of Galdós' attack upon political bossism or caciquismo which prevailed at the turn of the century.

Don Pedro aided a governmental minister in his political career some years ago. Therefore he is certain that this man will now reciprocate by providing Cesáreo with the lucrative position he seeks in order to save his ruined family. Although Cesáreo does not receive this particular post, he eventually does obtain a coveted position of wealth and power. His impending marriage to the wealthy widow with extensive land holdings in Agramante undoubtedly has a direct relationship to his newly acquired ducal rank. Once he has attained authority and wealth, Cesáreo shows himself to be callous, cruel, and vindictive. He tries to destroy the life and work of the man his sister loves by reviving an old legal judgment against him. He is equally unkind when he joins his parents in disowning María, the "black sheep" of the family.

This play was considered in its time to be strikingly audacious and optimistic. In this work Galdós bitterly attacks the ruined, prejudiced, indolent aristocrats who arrogantly believe the world owes them a living. He protests against their perverted pride which expects to be supported at the expense of tradesmen, servants, creditors, and society in general. He does not stop at lashing out at this impoverished group, but continues to berate those hangers-on who feed off the wealth of others and enjoy unearned luxuries without contributing to society or making any constructive plans for their future economic security.

Here again Galdós propounds his gospel of labor. He suggests to the decaying aristocracy that its attitudes are hindering regeneration and retarding progress. Galdós moralizes that anyone who will abandon shackling tradition and outworn prejudices can, with true Spanish stoicism, rise above his deplorable condition through ingenuity, enterprise, and dedication to work.

CHAPTER VIII

COMPARISON AND COMMENTARY

As the thesis drama of the last half of the nineteenth century matured, it reflected changes in society and attitudes toward material wealth and its acquisition. During this development dramatists came to offer more valid solutions to meet the needs of the times.

In the plays of Tamayo we find influence of the materialism of mid-century. He depicts those avaricious individuals who seek to rise above their already prominent social positions, to replenish or increase sizable fortunes, and to enjoy luxuries obtainable through wealth. To secure the money they deem necessary the characters resort to marriage and other trite means. The author attacks this demoralizing greed of the socially corrupt upper stratum. Rather than a true solution to the basic problem he offers obvious recommendations: marry only for love and live carefully on existing assets.

Ayala, in addition to all that Tamayo suggests, adds a further contemporary note. He shows members of the new bourgeoisie who endeavor to establish unassailable security or to elevate themselves to the upper strata of financial and social prominence. He also introduces

people of lesser social and economic position who desire to rise above their station through financial betterment. While some seek profitable marriages, others try to achieve their goals through investments in private business deals, stocks, and big business. Ayala is similar to Tamayo in criticizing the worship of money over all else, that is, the importance of money over honor and friendship. But he also assails the dubious character of the business world in which one makes money at the expense of others under the guise of negocios. However, we again find simple solutions presented. Like Tamayo, Ayala urges observance of honest standards, contentment with the status quo, and treatment of money with perspective.

Echegaray's themes and treatment differ from those of other authors in this study. He gives a melodramatic depiction of one man's struggle with his conscience over money and another's greed to inherit his brother's wealth in order to achieve personal security and independence. Like the preceding writers he attacks the disproportionate emphasis on money, the unrealistic attitudes toward the disposition of money, and the lengths to which people will go to attain it. He also suggests a universal solution: ethical and moral behavior.

Gaspar depicts members of the middle class who avidly desire to regain lost wealth, to continue to rise in station, or to bolster shaky financial security. They even go beyond resorting to crooked financial dealings to obtain

money. They uphold false standards and deviously maintain façades to conceal their plight as they earnestly hope and maneuver for favoritism in both business and politics. Marriage is only a secondary means of obtaining money. Young daughters do consider marrying into money, but they do so only for family security and not for personal luxury. Gaspar assails the public and private corruption and immorality he observes. He attacks big business graft and political corruption, the good but weak-willed individuals who compromise their principles for material gain, and the people who go to extreme lengths to maintain former positions which they cannot afford. For the first time a new solution is presented, although it was implied earlier by Echegaray. Gaspar recommends that people who seek security and independence and those who are struggling to meet basic needs of life accept their current situations, both social and financial. Regardless of former or anticipated positions they should conduct themselves with integrity and procure gainful employment.

Galdós presents all classes from the ruined aristocracy to the risen proletariat. He depicts those who are endeavoring to avoid or remedy financial ruin. To meet the necessities of life they sell redeemable assets, rely upon charity, and seek political favors. Again marriage is only a secondary means of obtaining money. Galdós attacks the sloth and degeneracy of the fallen aristocracy and the inefficiency and indolence of the

struggling middle class. He assails false pride and unrealistic attitudes, mistaken charity which saps initiative and promotes public dependence, and the corrupt boss system. Galdós, like Gaspar, encourages the adoption of work. Gaspar's recommendation is meant to serve as an antidote for the unethical maneuvering for money. But Galdós encounters changed conditions. Therefore he implores people to seek money purposefully to remedy the laxity which characterizes the society of his time. People should make an honest appraisal of their situation and apply themselves to work. He encourages them to abandon prejudice and hindering traditions, particularly those which have led to the misconception that those who work for money are crude and crass. He suggests a uniting of the worker and idealist, a merging of the best of the old aristocratic values with the new democratic ideals.

An interesting aspect of this study reveals that the dramatists considered here expressed in their plays varying viewpoints regarding work and the proper and justifiable means of securing and handling money.

Tamayo deals essentially with the upper classes. While he never promotes the idea or work, he does condone the seeking of a position in government if the resultant money is truly needed. He suggests that people live on existing means, no matter how modest, and that they spend prudently. However they should be generous with what they have, not miserly.

Ayala echoes Tamayo's plea to treat money in proper perspective and live on existing income. But in Consuelo he adds praise of attaining education or training in preparation for a career. However, involvement in big business, if it undermines integrity, should be avoided.

Echegaray suggests that rather than maneuver for security and independence or accept charity, one should seek gainful employment. Earning money in business is admired when rewards are honorably and not avidly sought, and prudently and generously used.

Gaspar goes a step further. He suggests that menial labor is a suitable solution to the pressing needs of the once wealthy. Also a woman may marry below her social class and work with her husband to meet their family needs. The self-made man who rises through hard work is praiseworthy for his achievement. Gaspar believes that with small means one often finds truer happiness than with wealth. He reminds those considering a marriage of speculation that greater rewards are to be found in marrying for love and working and living on a modest income.

Galdós reflects the sentiments of Gaspar but he adds another dimension. He advises the near-impoverished to make existing assets productive through ingenuity, hard work, vigor, and drive. He says that they should accept work to meet the necessities of life regardless of former social status or hardships involved. Multi-faceted

education and training of talent for application to work are admired by Galdós. He also approves of honest business, mercantile, and financial enterprises and executives who are unafraid to labor at lesser jobs. He also encourages people to enjoy tasks for their own sakes, not merely for money.

The dramatists studied here exhibit in some of their characters qualities which they highly esteem. These characters tend to suggest the attitudes toward money and related problems of which the various authors approve.

Tamayo

Hija y madre

Luis is an ideal noble gentleman. He is honorable, loyal, generous, and democratic. Though he is not wealthy, he is content with his status and shows no intention of seeking money to win the avaricious woman he loves.

Lo positivo

Rafael is an ideal, noble gentleman who fought for his religion, country, and queen. He is honorable, loyal, and generous to the point of nearly depleting his inheritance. He unsuccessfully plays the stock market to win an avaricious girl who finally adopts realistic standards and accepts him and the status quo. He receives a second inheritance and again demonstrates his generosity by giving a major portion away with his

fiancée's blessing.

Ayala

El tanto por ciento

Pablo is an ideal hero who is honorable to a fault. Though now ruined financially, he must pay a debt to comply with his word given earlier. He prefers to obtain money through a usurer rather than marry his wealthy fiancée when her character is questioned.

Consuelo

Fernando is an honorable, idealistic, loyal, generous, middle class young man. Though he fears poverty more than death, he refused a minor but profitable part in a questionable business deal. He endured hardships to obtain an education for an engineering position. Later, however, he loses in esteem after advancing to the world of big business and relaxing his integrity.

Antonia is an honorable, virtuous, generous, loyal, middle class woman and a practical mother. She admires the educated, good Fernando as introduced in the play. She also points out the enjoyment to be found in nature (lands), art (luxuries), etc. without having to own them.

Gaspar

Las circunstancias

Miguel is a middle class man who values

honor and virtue above all else. Though he once knew opulence, he now dedicates himself to humble work in order to meet current family needs in spite of former expectations of a better job and higher rank. He is esteemed as thus introduced, though he later falls.

La levita

Cesáreo, a middle class man, is honorable about everything but his façade. He lost his high post and luxury so dedicates himself to a modest and lowly job to meet family needs. He eventually falls because of his flaw, but is redeemed by ultimate acceptance of menial labor.

Valeriano is an honorable, loyal, unpretentious, and generous middle class man who rose from poverty to affluence by hard work, careful saving, and investing. Though he owns his own business, he does not shun physical labor.

El estómago

The upper middle class Antonio is honorable, loyal, democratic. He rose from a humble clerk to a multi-millionaire through his own efforts. He reflects that years of struggle were happier than those of opulence. After losing his fortune he compromises his principles for financial gain and falls from favor until he offers to work to support his family.

Ricardo is a middle class man who is honorable, loyal, compassionate, and generous, though poor. He refuses easy money through political appointment as he prefers to continue working with his artistic talent even though it is not yet financially rewarding.

Laura is an honorable, virtuous, loyal, upper middle class girl. Her generosity is shown as she saves her clothes allowance to invest in order to aid the elderly poor. She would sacrifice herself for her parents but prefers marrying for love even if she and her husband must work.

Las personas decentes

Ramón, a middle class provincial youth, is generous with his wealth. He esteems honor above money, social status, dubious friendships, and a political appointment.

Echegaray

O locura o santidad

Lorenzo is an upper middle class man. He is honorable and idealistic but too quixotic for complete acceptance by the playwright as he destroys the lives of himself and others. Other characters of whom the author approves suggest an alternate solution: combine honor with practicality.

El gran galeoto

Julián is an honorable, loyal, extremely generous, upper class man. He accepts the fact of having wealth and business acumen but he never exhibits greed.

Ernesto, a middle class man, is honorable to a fault and generous. He refuses unearned charity and requests a modest job. Ultimately he is penniless but he still assumes the responsibility for another.

Galdós

La loca de la casa

Cruz is an honorable, crude, unhypocritical, middle class man who was once a peasant. Through romantic adventures, hard work, and business dealings he became wealthy. He still continues to labor. Cruz is a diamond in the rough. He is criticized for being stubborn and miserly.

Victoria, an upper middle class woman, is honorable, virtuous, loyal, and generous. She dedicates herself to challenges and arduous tasks though not for personal gain. A self-sacrificing woman, she weds for money to save her family, including young orphans, and to aid charitable institutions.

The noble Marquesa is an honorable,

virtuous, loyal woman and mother. After falling to poverty she exhibts thrift, ingenuity, dedication, and astute farm management. She selflessly performs her own chores and educates her sons for careers.

La de San Quintín

José is an honorable, loyal, democratic, compassionate, upper middle class man. He rose from a baker to a business tycoon through hard work, thrift, and business acumen. However he has a slight miserly streak.

Rosario is a noble, honorable, virtuous young woman who becomes democratic in her thinking. She is impoverished as a result of paying her late husband's debts and wishes to continue living debt-free. She prefers lowering her social status, to wed and work, over marrying for money to regain position.

Voluntad

Isidora, a middle class young woman, is honorable and principled in business. Though having lived un-wed with her lover, she still is esteemed for her ambitious, though not avaricious, desire to rescue and build the family business. Her practical application of will, energy, and intelligence are admired. She is not deterred by fear of public censure for her disregard of the

accepted code of moral conduct.

Santos is an honorable, loyal, compassionate, generous, middle class man. He farms and hunts for himself and shares the surplus with others. He disapproves of the acquisition of money for its own sake but approves of honorable business.

Mariucha

María is an honorable, virtuous, generous, loyal, noble young woman. Though living in abject poverty, her honor and unselfishness forbid acceptance of charity and demand an ingenious, pioneering solution. She establishes a business enterprise involving hard work at the risk of serious censure.

León is a noble young man who is honorable and generous with his aid. He is thrifty, though not miserly, with his money. He has gone from riches to rags to small-business success which he gained by arduous labor. León is the ideal self-made man devoid of false values.

In the plays of Tamayo and Ayala we find ideal gentlemen resembling those of the earlier romantic era--men who live by the honor code insulated against the materialism of their time. The one exception is Fernando in the second of Ayala's plays here studied. He adheres to the same old standards, educating himself to become an

honorable member of the new society. But gradually he succumbs to the lure and evils of big business. The gentlemen of Tamayo's plays are of noble rank. But we learn from the second play that society is no longer impressed with titles. Wealth governs position as much, if not more, than anything else.

In Gaspar's plays we find men of the middle class who once enjoyed wealth and station comparable to that of many of the nobility. Initially, they abide by the same code for they value honor and virtue above all. They gracefully accept employment below their former station in order to meet the needs of daily living. However they find themselves incapable of enduring their humbler circumstances due to increased social emphasis upon money. They then compromise principles to alleviate their unhappiness.

For the first time in these plays we also find attention paid to members of the nouveau riche: the humble clerk become multi-millionaire, and the provincial youth, son of a wealthy and ambitious politician. The businessman loses his wealth like the two preceding characters and he also loses his former integrity. The provincial youth goes to Madrid to learn--so he thinks--the honor code as practiced by gentlemen. He finds himself baffled by the ambiguous, new interpretation of acceptable and proper behavior.

Echegaray presents the typical idealistic romantic

hero. Though now dressed in a business suit, he still adheres to the strictest letter of the honor code in an anachronistic fashion.

In the plays of Galdós we see two men who have risen from humble stations to enviable positions of wealth through driving ambition and unremitting labor. In spite of their adherence to high moral standards, which should have qualified them for the title of gentlemen, in the eyes of society they fail to attain that status. They lack the ability to do "the right thing" or make the gracious gesture with finesse.

Also in Galdós' plays a modest merchant, a wealthy businessman, and a titled nobleman are in serious financial difficulties. They are incapable or unwilling to take positive remedial action. They fail to fulfill their roles as family providers and cede their positions to women. The merchant and businessman are principled and virtuous though inefficient. They have finer character than the noblemen, for they believe in adherence to a code of honor. One would expect the titled gentleman to preserve pride and honor above all else. But he scorns the one who feeds him and resorts to charity and eventual parasitism.

We do see, however, one impoverished nobleman who turns to difficult physical labor to make his way. After forswearing his profligate past, he becomes a coal worker--subsequently a businessman. He exhibits the best of the

old aristocratic code in combination with new and practical attitudes developed to meet the demanding needs of a changing Spanish society.

In all but Galdós' plays women in these dramas play subordinate roles except as they encourage or discourage their male counterparts, serve as romantic interest, or bring honor or money to the family through advantageous marriages.

A new note is added also as we see titled widows cherishing honor and integrity to such a degree that they are reduced to near poverty as a result of having paid the debts bequeathed them by their husbands. One prefers to accept a lower social station, a simpler life, and employment to meet her needs rather than sacrifice her principles. Another adheres to similar standards through difficult work formerly delegated to men and servants, managing thus to sustain herself and educate her sons.

Two other young women assume even bolder tasks. They undertake the creation or salvation of businesses and expose themselves to the public and therefore probable censure. Each finds her father afflicted with the inefficiency and degeneracy current among the bourgeoisie and aristocracy. Because they adhere to sounder values they overcome any false pride they might have had. With commendable and honorable enterprise they achieve financial security for their respective families.

At mid-century there is still prominent in

nineteenth century Spanish drama a romantic honor code scrupulously observed by the titled and wealthy. During the latter part of the century this code of the aristocracy gradually yielded to expediency under economic pressures. Conversely, the newly affluent classes sought to emulate the aristocracy by adopting the aristocracy's "code." However, many of them merely rendered lip service to standards of integrity while conducting themselves in a manner inharmonious with their avowed principles. When social pressures waned the middle class regained perspective. The aristocracy was disillusioned with its position which no longer afforded former prominence and prestige. This class felt no further compulsion to serve as lofty models of honor for a lesser bourgeoisie. The lack of drive and ingenuity found in this new aristocracy and in the now inefficient though principled middle class resulted in an incapacity to cope with financial problems. Therefore it appears that the restoration of sounder financial and moral standards lay in the hands of the emergent entrepreneurs, including members of the weaker sex and the few more realistic regenerated noblemen.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

Spain in the nineteenth century experienced numerous political, economic, and social changes. Concomitant with such turbulence there resulted social ills which revolved around money and material possessions. The dramatists treated in this study were aware of these ills and made them the basis of their social thesis plays.

During the 1850's and 1860's Spain experienced notable prosperity and the rise of an unprecedented middle class. This class included industrialists, traders, landowners, speculators, prosperous lawyers, financial advisers, and generals who benefited from frequent political upheavals. A hitherto virtually non-existent middle class was now emerging in significant numbers. It was exposed not only to formerly unknown financial and social status but also to an expanding economy. This resulted in an over-emphasis, to an inordinate degree, upon money and materialism.

Deeply concerned about this greed and subsequent disregard of honor and integrity, Tamayo y Baus and López de Ayala accurately depicted and attacked this current evil.

However, as novices at this new type of theater, they adhered to the familiar pattern of former dramatists. They concentrated mainly upon the upper strata of society and employed stock characters and trite denouements.

Rather than condemn or attack the capitalistic system itself, they merely suggested superficial reform and recommended closer adherence to sound moral precepts.

The phenomenal economic advance which began at mid-century was slowed by the economic crisis of 1865. This resulted in financial ruin for many. Furthermore, some people with extensive private holdings in Cuba suffered disaster at the hands of the insurrectionists during Cuba's unsuccessful revolution of 1870-1878. A second upswing of prosperity following the depression gave new impetus to a desire for money. People sought money not so much for the mere acquisition of wealth as for the material luxuries it could buy. These luxuries were necessary to support class distinction and new elevated middle-class standards from which it was a social crime to deviate. Furthermore, numerous political disturbances were common in the nineteenth century. These caused the rise and fall, both economically and socially, of those who sought fortune through governmental posts. Many who fell from favor and into financial insecurity struggled to restore their loss by means of political bossism or caciquismo which emerged after political repose was achieved in 1874.

Enrique Gaspar attacked this intensified desire for riches and status. He satirized the devious means employed either to secure and retain money or to maintain unjustifiable standards.

Gaspar modeled himself upon Tamayo and Ayala whom he admired. He chose to depict the middle and lower, as well as the upper, segments of the bourgeoisie. But unlike them he implanted true social questions as he revealed men as they were rather than as they ought to be. As a consequence of showing his people in the worst of plights and solving his dilemmas in a more life-like fashion than did his predecessors, he has been considered by some to be too naturalistic.

Gaspar went a step further than the earlier playwrights in his attack of unscrupulous behavior among capitalists and politicians. He added to the plea of the other authors for personal reform his exhortation to honest appraisal of the situation. Because of the lower financial status of many of his characters, this involved the need to work for the necessities of life and to forego those lofty ambitions which lead to unrealistic aspirations. On the other hand he held up for emulation the poor man who rose to success through hard work.

Echegaray began his dramatic career during the same period as Gaspar. But he was a melodramatic romanticist rather than a social thesis dramatist <u>per se</u>. Nevertheless, in his later plays he wrote of universal

moral problems with contemporary social overtones. The very fact that he deemed it necessary to present two dramas hinging upon money is indicative of the seriousness with which even he regarded this prevailing problem. In these works he pleaded for ethical and moral behavior regarding the prevailing attitude toward the acquisition and disposition of money.

The old blue-blood aristocracy and the nouveau riche enjoyed the benefits of the second economic boom, which began after the crash of 1865 and lasted some fifteen years, and the relative political calm which followed the Restoration of 1874. By the last decade of the century a calmer approach to life prevailed. The bourgeoisie formerly was obsessed with the acquisition of money. But now it had modified its outlook to accept saner standards. However it ultimately demonstrated again the familiar inability to appraise and handle money properly. This resulted in a dangerous condition of inefficiency and unthriftiness. The aristocrats felt secure and therefore indifferent to shifting circumstances. They came to believe their wealth and luxury to be rights and privileges inherent in their position. However a general European depression eventually affected Spain early in the last decade of the century. This left some of the less financially secure in precarious positions and many of the wealthy ruined. Moreover, the growing tide of democratic spirit and the rise of socialism and communism in

industrial centers found the country in desperate need of economic reform.

In his plays Galdós attacked this very lack of efficiency and thrift. He also assailed indolence, false pride, and unrealistic attitudes which sap initiative and lead to an unjustifiable dependence upon charity. Another of his targets for criticism was the corrupt political boss system.

Galdós depicted the nobility and, like Gaspar, the various levels of the middle class. A recognized master of realism, he brightened his works with local color and rather life-like dialogue. Galdós tempered his criticism of social problems with understanding. With optimistic idealism he devised solutions of encouraging symbolic significance and he advocated the same critical appraisal of the situation at hand as Gaspar. Also like Gaspar, he praised the self-made man. Galdós, with a reformer's zeal, propounded his thesis of work as his panacea for social-financial ills. People should meet a problem with selfless dedication and a will to overcome hampering tradition and prejudices. They should employ their talent, ingenuity, skill, and training for self-improvement. Galdós optimistically believed that individuals have within their power the means for personal and national regeneration.

Jacinto Benavente, a twentieth century dramatist, began contributing to the theater during the last decade

of the nineteenth century. In his first plays he endeavored to show the adverse effects that may result from dedication to the acquisition of money and to depict the egotism and corruption of the nouveau riche of the era. However he lacked the optimism and reformer's zeal of Galdós and merely showed the nature of the problems without offering specific solutions.

We have studied materialism and money as motivational forces in fourteen plays written by five authors over an approximate fifty-year period. We observe in these works an increase in naturalness and realism as the playwrights endeavor to reflect accurately an ever changing society. We also see a gradual turning to problems commonly shared by greater numbers of people and an offering of more valid, practical solutions. The individuals introduced in the early works are wealthy and titled ideal gentlemen of noble characteristics who pattern their lives upon the principles of the honor code. But this romantic hero is initially replaced by the more mundane nouveau riche member of the emergent middle class and then ultimately by individuals from all stations in society. Due to the changing economic and social scene the dramatists felt a need to assail what they considered the most severe and prevalent ills of their respective times. As they offered more constructive solutions they came to add to their simple answers of higher morality an increasing emphasis upon wholesome dedication to work.

Therefore, in essence, they advocated applying the time honored code of the past to positive action leading toward a stronger, progressive Spain.

EDITIONS OF PLAYS USED FOR THIS STUDY

Echegaray, José. *El gran galeoto* in *Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays* edited by Lewis E. Brett. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1935.

_____. *O locura o santidad*. *Teatro escogido*. 2nd ed.; Madrid: Aguilar, S. A. de Ediciones, 1957.

Gaspar, Enrique. *El estómago*. 2nd ed.; Madrid: Imprenta de José Rodriguez, 1874.

_____. *La levita*. Madrid: Alonso Gullón, 1878.

_____. *Las circunstancias*. 2n ed.; Madrid: Imprenta de José Rodriguez, 1867.

_____. *Las personas decentes*. Madrid: Imprenta de Fortanet, 1890.

López de Ayala, Adelardo. *Consuelo* in *Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays* edited by Lewis E. Brett. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1935.

_____. *El tanto por ciento*. *Obras completas*. Vol. V, Madrid: A. P. Dubrull, 1881-1885.

Pérez Galdós, Benito. *La de San Quintín* in *Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays* edited by Lewis E. Brett. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1935.

_____. *La loca de la casa*. *Obras completas*. Vol. VI, Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1942.

_____. *Mariucha*. *Obras completas*. Vol. VI, Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1942.

_____. *Voluntad*. Madrid: Librería de los Sucesores de Hernando, 1907.

Tamayo y Baus, Manuel. *Hija y madre*. *Obras de don Manuel Tamayo y Baus*. Vol. III, Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadereyra, 1898-1900.

Tamayo y Baus, Manuel. *Lo positivo*. *Obras de don Manuel Tamayo y Baus*. Vol. III, Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadereyra, 1898-1900.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Altamira y Crevea. Arte y realidad. Santiago, Chile: Empresa Letras, 1936.

Benavente, Jacinto. Comedias escogidas. 3rd ed.; Madrid: Aguilar, S. A. de Ediciones, 1964.

Berkowitz, H. Chonon. Pérez Galdós, the Spanish Liberal Crusader. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1948.

Blanco García, Francisco. La literatura española en el siglo XIX. Madrid: Sáenz de Jubera Hermanos, 1910.

Brenan, Gerald. The Literature of the Spanish People. Cambridge: University Press, 1953.

Brett, Lewis E. Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1935.

Browne, James R. An Aspect of Realism in Modern Spanish Drama: The Concept of Society. Chicago: Distributed by The University of Chicago Libraries, 1941.

Bueno, Manuel. Teatro español contemporáneo. Madrid: Biblioteca Renacimiento, 1909.

Carney, Hal. The Drama of Galdós. Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Nebraska, 1951.

_____. The Dramatic Technique of Benito Pérez Galdós. Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1956.

Carr, Raymond. Spain 1808-1936. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.

Casalduero, Joaquín. Vida y obra de Galdós. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1951.

Chandler, Richard E., and Schwartz, Kessel. A New History of Spanish Literature. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961.

Cilley, Melissa Annis. El teatro español: Las épocas en el desarrollo del drama. Madrid: Blass, S. A., 1934.

Cortés, Narciso Alonso. "El teatro español en el siglo XIX," Historia general de las literaturas hispánicas. ed. Guillermo Diaz-Plaja. Barcelona: n. n., 1957.

Cotarelo y Mori, Emilio. Estudios de historia literaria de España. Madrid: Imprenta de la revista española, 1901.

del Río, Ángel. Estudios galdosianos. Zaragoza: Biblioteca del Hispanista, 1953.

Deleito y Piñuela, José. Estampas del Madrid teatral fin de siglo. Madrid: Saturnino Calleja, 1946.

Esquer Torres, Ramón. El teatro de Tamayo y Baus. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1965.

Goldberg, Isaac. The Drama of Transition. Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Co., 1922.

Gregersen, Halfdan. Ibsen and Spain. Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1936.

Kirschenbaum, Leo. Enrique Gaspar and the Social Drama in Spain. ("University of California Publications in Modern Philology," Vol. 25, No. 4.) Berkeley; University of California Press, 1944.

Marble, Annie Russell. The Nobel Prize Winners in Literature. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1925.

Melsheimer, Faith. The Dramatic Theory of don Manuel Tamayo y Baus. Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Ohio State University, 1925.

Morley, S. Griswold. Introduction to his edition of Benito Pérez Galdós' Mariucha. New York: D. C. Heath and Co., 1921.

Muñoz, Matilde. Historia del teatro dramático en España. Madrid: E. de Miguel Huertas, 1948.

Peak, J. Hunter. Social Drama in Nineteenth Century Spain. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964.

Peers, Edgar Allison. A History of the Romantic Movement in Spain. London: Cambridge University Press, 1940.

_____(ed.). Spain: A Companion to Spanish Studies. 5th ed. revised. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1956.

Pérez Galdós, Benito. Obras inéditas. Vol. I: Nuestro teatro. Edited by Alberto Ghiraldo. Madrid: Renacimiento, 1923.

Picón, J. Octavio. Ayala, estudio biográfico. Madrid: Compañía de Impresores y libreros, n. d.

Ramos, Antonio Oliveira. Politics, Economics and Men of Modern Spain: 1808-1946. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946.

Revilla, Manuel de la. Críticas. Burgos: Imprenta de D. Timoteo Arnaiz, 1884.

Sáinz de Robles, Federico Carlos. El teatro español, historia y antología. Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1943.

Sedgwick, Henry Dwight. Spain: A Short History of Its Politics, Literature and Art from Earliest Times to the Present. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1926.

Shields, A. K. Adelardo López de Ayala and the Spanish Stage. Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1930.

Sicars y Salvadó, Narciso. Don Manuel Tamayo y Baus. Barcelona: Tipografía Católica, 1906.

Starkie, Walter F. Jacinto Benavente. London: Oxford University Press, 1924.

_____. Modern Spain in Its Literature. ("Rice Institute Pamphlet," Vol. 16, No. 2.)

Tayler, Neale H. Las fuentes del teatro de Tamayo y Baus. Madrid: n. n., 1959.

Trend, John Brande. The Origins of Modern Spain. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934.

Valbuena Pratt, Ángel. El teatro moderno en España. Zaragoza: Ediciones Partenón, 1944.

Valbuena Pratt, Ángel. Literatura dramática española. Barcelona: Editorial Labor, S. A., 1930.

Young, John R. José Echegaray: A Study of His Dramatic Technique. Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Illionis, 1938.

Yxart, José. El arte escénico en España. Barcelona: Imprenta de La Vanguardia, 1894.

Vita

Judith Allen Noble was born August 10, 1936 in Blue Island, Illinois. After receiving her early schooling in Chicago and Glen Ellyn, Illinois she moved to Dallas, Texas and graduated there from Highland Park High School in 1954. She entered Louisiana State University the following September and was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of Education of that institution in 1958. Following a year of work as Field Secretary for Delta Zeta Sorority, she was accepted in the Graduate School of Louisiana State University to study toward a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Spanish Language and Literature under a three year NDEA Title IV Fellowship. After a fourth year as a graduate assistant, she obtained a position as Instructor of Spanish in the Department of Foreign Languages at Iowa State University, where she presently serves as an Assistant Professor of Spanish.

EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Judith Allen Noble

Major Field: Spanish

Title of Thesis: Development of the Theme of Materialism in the Social Thesis Drama of Nineteenth Century Spain.

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

March 1, 1968